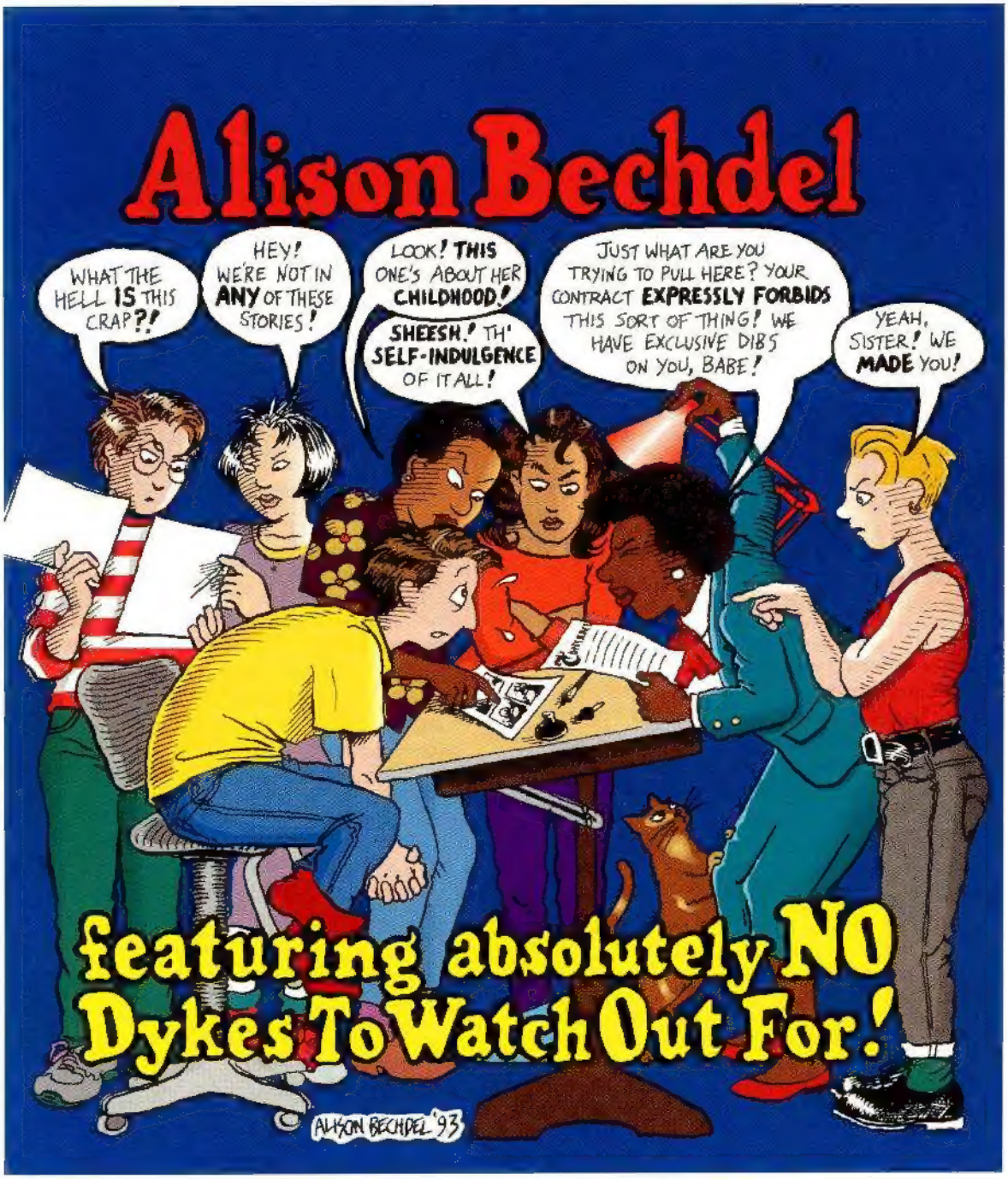
EARLY SUMMER 1993

GAY comics #19

$2.95

MATURE READERS


Alison Bechdel
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS CRAP?!
HEY! WE'RE NOT IN ANY OF THESE STORIES!
LOOK! THIS ONE'S ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD!
SHEESH.! TH' SELF-INDULGENCE OF IT ALL!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL HERE? YOUR CONTRACT EXPRESSLY FORBIDS THIS SORT OF THING! WE HAVE EXCLUSIVE DIBS ON YOU, BABE!
YEAH, SISTER! WE MADE YOU!
featuring absolutely NO Dykes To Watch Out For!
ALISON BECHDEL '93

FROM THE EDITOR

GAY COMICS #19: Early Summer 1993

edited by Andy Mangels

Welcome back to *Gay Comics*, and our long-awaited much-anticipated **Alison Bechdel** Special!

Alison is one of the most famous lesbian cartoonists of the 20th Century. Her popular *Dykes To Watch Out For* serial runs in newspapers around the world. When I approached Alison to do an issue of *Gay Comics*, she asked if I wanted a *Dykes To Watch Out For* story. I told her I'd prefer to see some new stories non-related to her epic work, and she gave a sigh of thanks. Seems she's been wanting to spread her artistic wings out some more, and this was giving her the perfect chance to do so. Hence came the half-joking title that this is the *"No Dykes To Watch Out For Special!"*

Speaking of "no dykes," I'd like to speak to many of you who are joining us for the first time, brought on by Alison's talent and reputation. I was stunned at a **March on Washington** *Gay Comics* signing when several women asked me why there were no lesbian comics. I proudly showed them our back issues and gave them our not-so secret editorial policy:

Gay Comics has **50%** material by women in **every** issue!

When I became editor, I wanted to make it clear that there would be no sexual inequality in my book. Thus, with the exception of special issues like our previous *Leonard & Larry Special* by **Tim Barela**, and this issue by Alison, all regular *Gay Comics* will have exactly 50% material by women/womyn/womon/wimmin/wimyn.

Who are some of the names you may have missed from past issues? **Donna Barr** (#15, 16), **Jennifer Camper** (#14, 15, 17), **Rhonda Dicksion** (#15-17), **Leslie Ewing** (#14, 17), **Julie Franki** (#17,18), **Leanne Franson** (#18), **Diana Green** (#18), **Roberta Gregory** (#14-17), **Joan Hilty** (#14, 18), **Kris Kovick** (#17), **Julia Lacquement** (#18), **J.D. March** (#14, 18), **Andrea Natalie** (#14-16, 18), **Jackie Randall** (#14, 16, 18), **Laura Rebecca** (#18), **Cheela Smith** (#17) **Noreen Stevens** (#14, 15), and **Linda Sue Welch** (#18). Plus, March On Washington cartoon art in *Gay Comics* #17 from **Fish, Dianne DiMassa, Diane Germain, Nicole Ferentz**, and **Alisa Gordaneer.**

I'll ask *you*: Where are the lesbian/bisexual/women cartoonists?

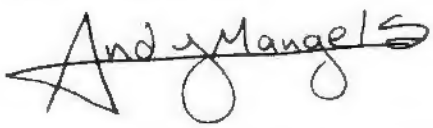
If you *haven't* been reading, you've been *missing* them.

But, of course, there are ways to correct that mistake. Below you'll find information about ordering back issues, and about submitting your own work.

Next issue, later this Summer, be here for our second SuperHero theme issue, with surprises galore! Under covers by **J.A. Fludd**, comic master **George Pérez**, and **Julie Franki**, you'll thrill to the adventures of the queerest heroes of them all. **Jennifer Camper, Kurt Erichsen, Joan Hilty, Robert Kirby, Roberta Gregory, Howard Stangroom, Stephen Lowther, Julie Franki, J.A. Fludd**, myself, and Ireland's own **Malachy Covey** and **Sean Doran** provide the thrills!

Coming down the pike in the future is another special with half of the issue by **Roberta Gregory** and half by **P. Craig Russell** and **David Sexton**. Plus, watch for our "Funny Animal" issue with an *Omaha, The Cat Dancer* cross-over! Yowza!

Please, Keep Loving!



Send *Gay Comics* submissions and letters to:
Andy Mangels - Editor, Gay Comics
PO Box 3226, Portland, OR, 97208-3226
Submission responses may take a long time.
Always include a phone number.

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$3.50 each (US) $4.00 each (Can)
$5.50 each (overseas)
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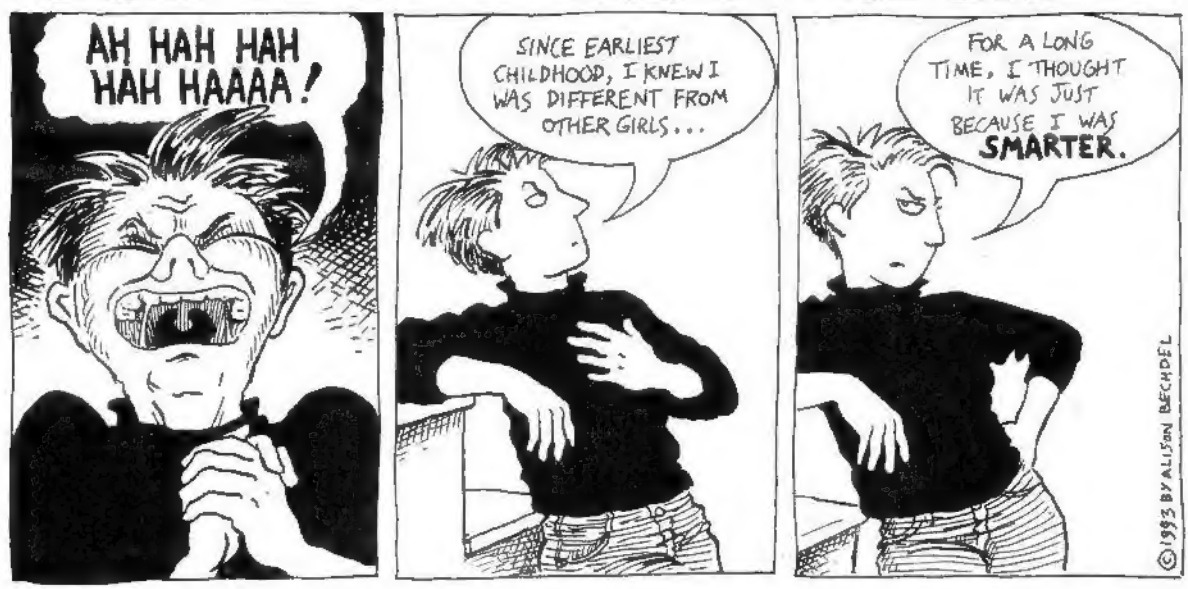
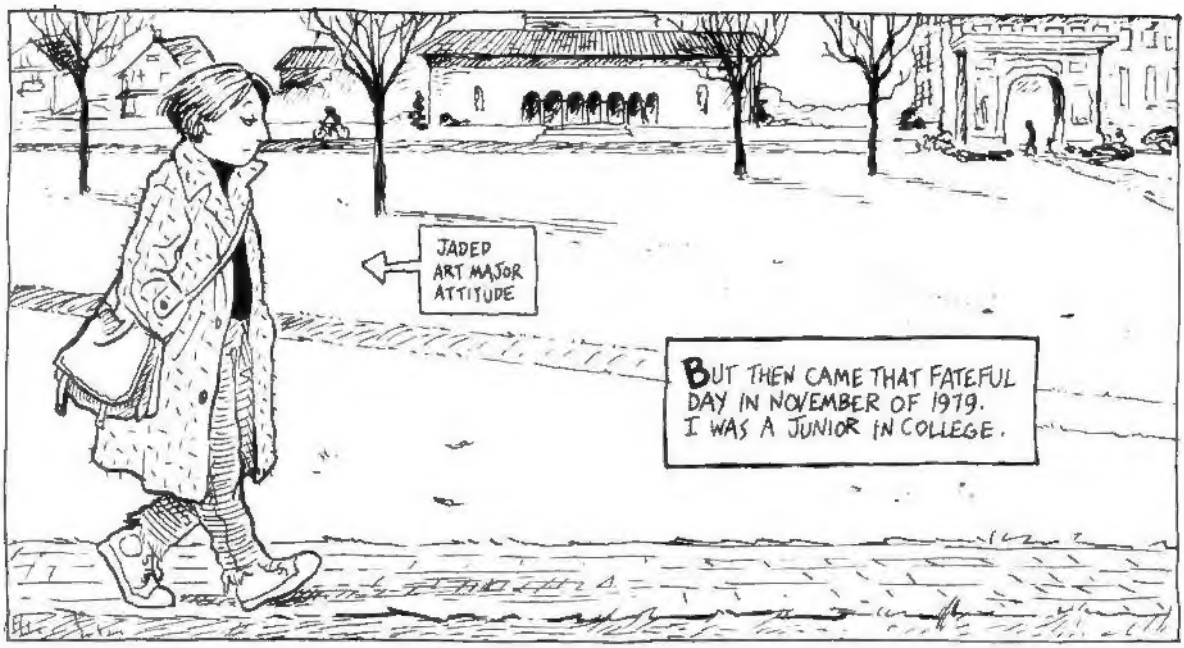
COMING OUT STORY


AH HAH HAH HAH HAAAA!
SINCE EARLIEST CHILDHOOD, I KNEW I WAS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GIRLS...
FOR A LONG TIME, I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST BECAUSE I WAS SMARTER.
©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL



I HAD JUST BEEN BROWSING AT THE CAMPUS BOOKSTORE, SOMETHING I DID A LOT OF IN THOSE DAYS.

I WAS LONELY, A NEW TRANSFER STUDENT. BEING ENTIRELY ASEXUAL, APOLITICAL, AND ASOCIAL, I HADN'T MADE MANY FRIENDS YET.

Joy of Semiotics
FOUCAULT THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BOREDOM
THE FLACCID TEXT
STRUCTURALISM FROM LEVI-STRAUSS TO GIRBAUD
FRANCAIS IS DESIRE IN THE WORKS OF M.N. PROUST

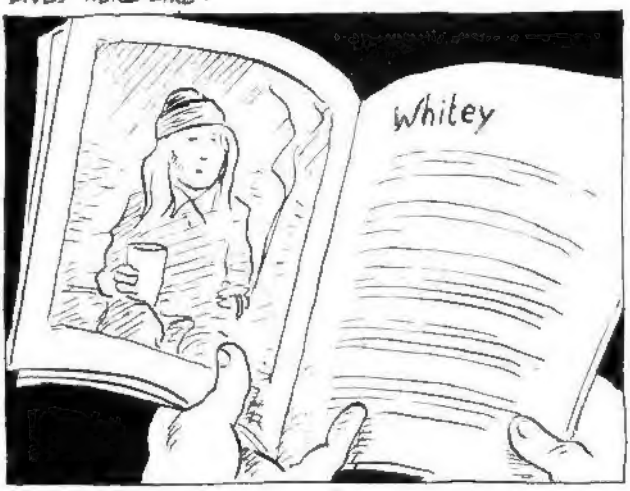
WHEN I WASN'T IN CLASS OR AT THE BOOKSTORE, I WAS GETTING HIGH AND GOING TO MOVIES.

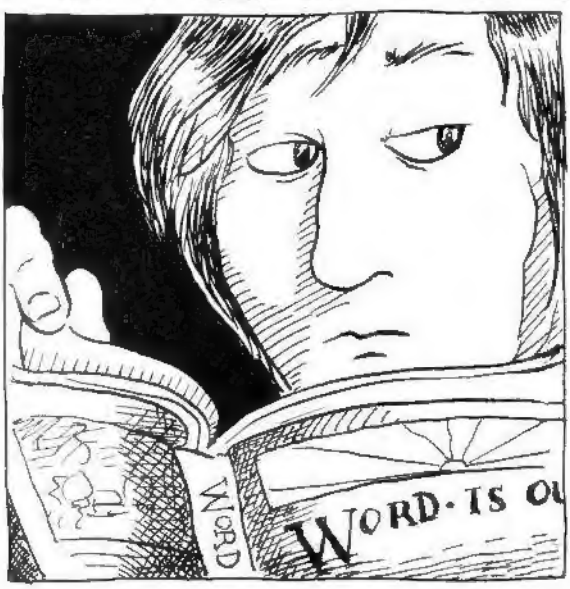
MY CINEMATIC EDUCATION WOULD HAVE BEEN EXCELLENT IF I COULD REMEMBER ANY OF IT.

THE DRUGS, THE ENDLESS MOVIEGOING, THE HOURS OF BROWSING THROUGH BOOKS... I WAS TRYING DESPERATELY TO DISTRACT MYSELF FROM A TRUTH THAT WAS SLOWLY BUT SURELY STRUGGLING TO THE SURFACE OF MY SOLITARY, SEX-STARVED SOUL.

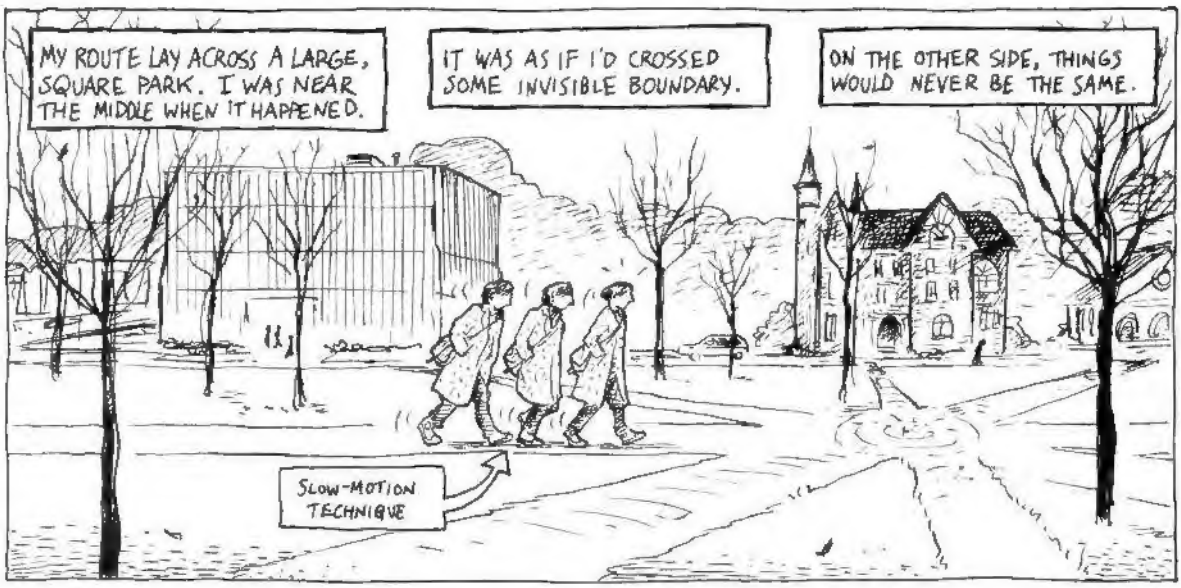
ONE OF THE BOOKS I CHANCED TO FLIP THROUGH THAT PARTICULAR GRAY AFTERNOON WAS "ABOUT HOMOSEXUALS," AS I LATER NOTED IN MY JOURNAL.

VARIOUS PEOPLE WERE INTERVIEWED ABOUT HOW THEY HAD COME TO REALIZE THEY WERE GAY, AND WHAT THEIR LIVES WERE LIKE.





I READ FOR A WHILE, THEN AT MY USUAL TIME I LEFT THE BOOKSTORE AND HEADED BACK TO MY DORM.


MY ROUTE LAY ACROSS A LARGE, SQUARE PARK. I WAS NEAR THE MIDDLE WHEN IT HAPPENED.
IT WAS AS IF I'D CROSSED SOME INVISIBLE BOUNDARY.
ON THE OTHER SIDE, THINGS WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME.
SLOW-MOTION TECHNIQUE

I'M REMINDED OF THE MYTH OF ATHENA'S BIRTH. YOU KNOW THE STORY. SHE SPRINGS, FULLY GROWN AND IN COMPLETE ARMOR, FROM ZEUS'S HEAD.

MY OWN FESTERING BRAIN, AFTER YEARS OF IGNORANCE AND DENIAL, HAD FINALLY ERUPTED!

BY THE TIME I EMERGED FROM THE PARK, MY ENTIRE CONFUSING LIFE HAD PASSED BEFORE MY EYES AND RECONFIGURED ITSELF AROUND A STARTLING NEW REALIZATION.

JEEZ, THIS EXPLAINS EVERYTHING.
SCREEE!

I'M A LESBIAN.

YES, MY BURST OF INSIGHT IN THE SQUARE WAS A BIG STEP. BUT IT WAS ONLY THE FIRST OF A LONG, HARD JOURNEY.

I DIDN'T KNOW ANY LESBIANS. I BARELY KNEW ANY **WOMEN.** MY LIMITED SOCIAL INTERACTION ALL SEEMED TO BE WITH **STRAIGHT BOYS.**

IN A CRUEL TWIST OF FATE, I FOUND MYSELF FENDING OFF **NERDBOYS** WHILE MY WILDLY POPULAR AND HIP HETEROSEXUAL ROOMMATE HAD DISCOVERED **REAL LIVE LESBIANS!**

YEAH, ALL THE WOMEN I WORK WITH AT THE PRO-CHOICE OFFICE ARE GAY. HEY, YOU GOTTA TASTE THIS RASPBERRY-FLAVORED CONTRACEPTIVE FOAM!
ONE OF HER MANY STUDLY ADMIRERS
HALITOSIS
TENTATIVE GROPE
UH... D'YOU WANNA COME TO MY ROOM AND SEE MY HERMIT CRAB? I THINK YOU'D FIND IT INTERESTING.
GENERAL CHART OF THE SKY

SHE SEEMED TO HAVE ACCESS TO A WORLD I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW EXISTED... AND SHE SPOKE SO CARELESSLY OF MY DEEPEST HOPES AND FEARS!

I WENT TO THIS FUN MEETING AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER TONIGHT CALLED 'EXPLORING OUR LESBIAN SIDE.'
OH YEH?
...THERE'S REALLY NOT MUCH DEPTH TO WORDS. YET THEY DRESS IN ANALOGY AND (RATHER SUPERFLUOUSLY) DRAW ON TIES TO ACCOMMODATE THE AUTOMATIC IMPULSES OF THE SPHINX, WHO...
PSYCHO NERDBOY
CHART OF THE SKY

DESPAIR BECKONED... WHAT WAS "PRO-CHOICE?" IT SOUNDED LIKE SOME **FRINGE** POLITICAL GROUP! AND MEETINGS AT THE **WOMEN'S CENTER?** THIS STUFF WAS WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE!

BUT I PERSEVERED, IN MY OWN QUIET WAY. THE BOOKSTORE YIELDED ANOTHER HELPFUL VOLUME.

TOO NERVOUS TO READ SOMETHING SO BLATANT IN PUBLIC, I **BOUGHT** IT.

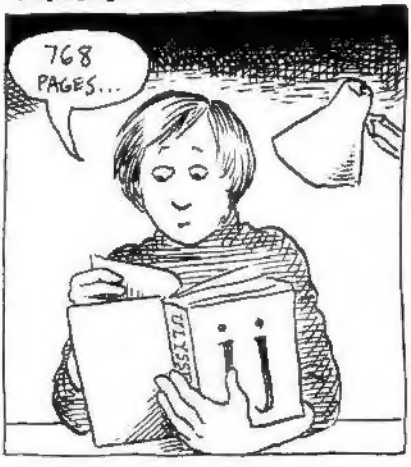
I READ THE WHOLE BOOK VORACIOUSLY. IT WAS VERY ENCOURAGING. WHEN I WAS DONE, I TORE THE COVER OFF, STUFFED THE REST OF IT IN A BROWN PAPER BAG, AND HID IT UNDER MY MATTRESS.

NEXT, I TOOK TO READING THE LESBIAN CHAPTER OF MY ROOMMATE'S **HITE REPORT** WHILE SHE WAS OUT.

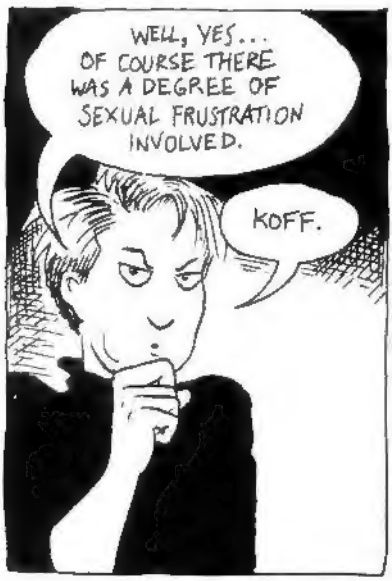
ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, AND BEFORE THE SEMESTER WAS OVER I HAD DEVOURED **DESERT OF THE HEART, RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE,** AND **THE WELL OF LONELINESS.**

CHRISTMAS BREAK WAS INTERMINABLE. MY PARENTS FAILED TO NOTICE THAT I HAD BECOME A THREAT TO THE NUCLEAR FAMILY.

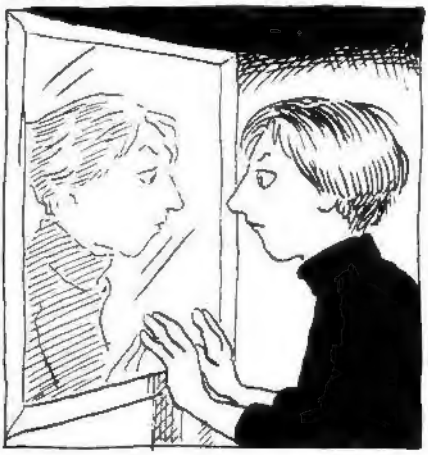
AT LAST I WAS BACK AT SCHOOL. I WAS ENROLLED IN AN INTENSIVE COURSE ON JAMES JOYCE'S **ULYSSES.** I SKIMMED IT...



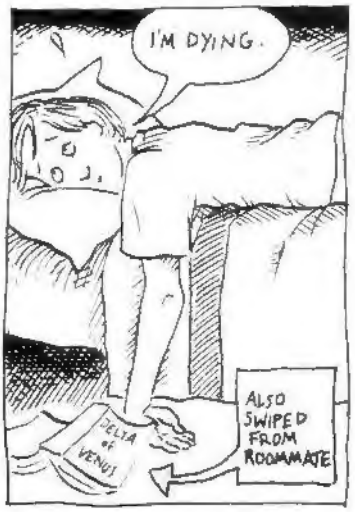
...MY FULL ACADEMIC PASSION WAS RESERVED FOR A **DIFFERENT** ODYSSEY... THE QUEST FOR MY **PEOPLE**.



AFTER ALL, I STILL HADN'T MET ANY LESBIANS. AND IF I **DID**, WOULD THEY FIND ME AS ATTRACTIVE AS THE **NERDBOYS** SEEMED TO?



I WAS DYING TO HAVE SEX WITH A WOMAN. DYING.



I PRAYED FOR A KINDLY, EXPERIENCED LESBIAN TO COME RESCUE ME FROM MY LONELY AGONIES.

BUT ALL I GOT WAS ANOTHER BOY.

THIS ONE WAS DIFFERENT, THOUGH. WE REALLY HIT IT OFF AND ENDED UP TALKING ALL NIGHT IN HIS ROOM.

INSTEAD OF FEELING REPULSED WHEN HE MADE HIS MOVE AT 4 A.M., I JUST FELT SAD.

I RETURNED, NUN-LIKE, TO MY CELL.

HE SHOWED UP AT MY DOOR THE NEXT DAY AT NOON.

WE HAD A LONG, HALTING DISCUSSION ABOUT WHY I'D LEFT HIS ROOM SO ABRUPTLY. FINALLY, HE SAID SOMETHING SO REMARKABLE THAT I ANSWERED WITHOUT THINKING.

INTOXICATED WITH RELIEF, I POURED MY HEART AND SOUL OUT TO THAT UNFORTUNATE YOUNG MAN. HE WAS QUITE DECENT ABOUT IT.

BUT AFTERWARDS, I PANICKED.

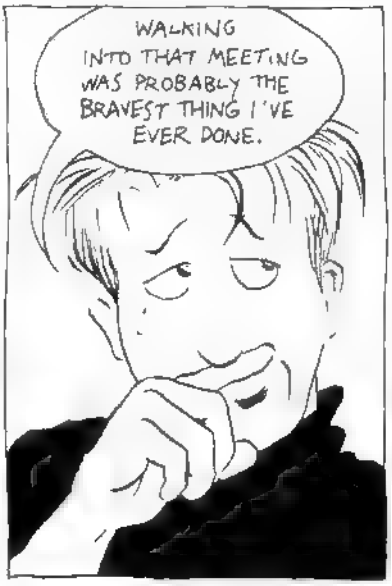
WHAT HAVE I DONE?! WHAT HAS **POSSESSED** ME?! YOU CAN'T JUST GO AROUND TELLING PEOPLE YOU'RE A LESBIAN UNLESS YOU KNOW YOU **ARE** ONE! DO I ACTUALLY THINK I HAVE THE **NERVE** TO BE A LESBIAN?!! **FUCK!** FUCKING **SHIT!** I DON'T EVEN **KNOW** ANY WOMEN! WHAT MAKES ME THINK I'M **ATTRACTED** TO THEM?!

I REALIZED I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN MY QUEST. I STARTED LOOKING AT WOMEN.

I LEARNED THAT THERE WAS A GAY ORGANIZATION ON CAMPUS!

I KNEW I HAD TO GO. I SPENT ALL TUESDAY AFTERNOON PSYCHING MYSELF UP.

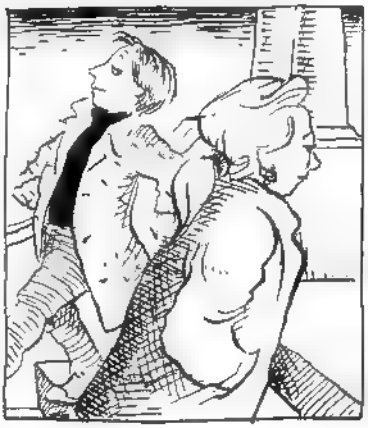
AS I ENTERED THE STUDENT UNION BUILDING THAT NIGHT. I FELT SURE EVERYONE KNEW WHERE I WAS HEADED.



I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE GROUP TALKED ABOUT. I SAT IN A CORNER, OVERWHELMED WITH THE SYMBOLIC WEIGHT OF SIMPLY BEING THERE, AMONG OTHERS. MY PEOPLE! I HAD FOUND THEM!

BUT **NOW** WHAT?

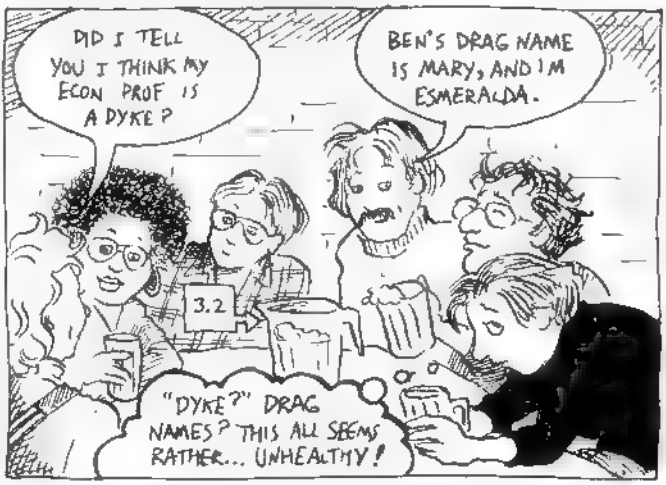
I COULDN'T TAKE ANY MORE STIMULATION. I NEEDED TO BE ALONE. AS I LEFT THE BUILDING, I HOPED EVERYONE COULD TELL WHERE I'D BEEN.



I WENT BACK TO THE GAY UNION DURING OFFICE HOURS. THEY HAD A TREASURE TROVE OF MAGAZINES AND BOOKS I HADN'T SEEN BEFORE.

IT'S ALL REALLY A MESS. I HOPE YOU CAN FIND WHAT YOU WANT.
Y'KNOW, I COULD ORGANIZE IT FOR YOU!
BUSY
R F D
CHRISTOPHER STREET
LESBIAN CONNECTION
AND THUS I BECAME THE OFFICE LIBRARIAN.

NEXT WEEK, I WENT OUT AFTER THE MEETING WITH THE "UNION" CROWD. I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT BEING SEEN IN PUBLIC WITH THEM.


DID I TELL YOU I THINK MY ECON PROF IS A DYKE?
BEN'S DRAG NAME IS MARY, AND I'M ESMERALDA.
3.2
"DYKE?" DRAG NAMES? THIS ALL SEEMS RATHER... UNHEALTHY!

THEY WERE EAGER TO INSTRUCT A NOVICE, BUT I COULDN'T REALLY RELATE TO THEM. I WAS PLAGUED WITH DOUBT.

YOU HAFTA LISTEN TO THIS ALBUM! IT'S SO INCREDIBLE. IT'S **OUR MUSIC!**
WHEN YOU'RE GIVING DIRECTIONS, NEVER SAY "STRAIGHT," ALWAYS SAY "GAYLY FORWARD"
LESBIAN **MUSIC?**
CHANGER AND THE CHANGED
THESE PEOPLE ARE **WEIRD.** MAYBE I'M NOT A HOMO AFTER ALL.

I KEPT GOING TO MEETINGS, THOUGH, AND GRADUALLY WE HIT ON SOME COMMON BONDS.

SLOWLY, I GAINED CONFIDENCE. I CAME OUT TO MY ROOMMATE.

I DISCOVERED THE EXHILARATION OF SPEAKING OUT AGAINST PREJUDICE.

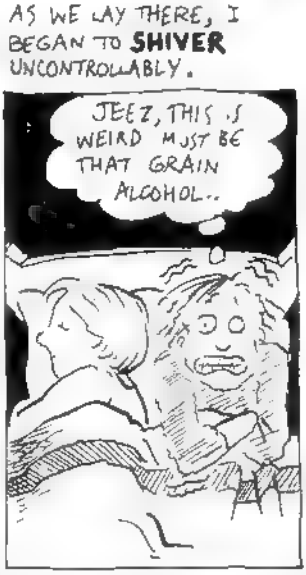
I DISCOVERED ALCOHOL.

BUT I STILL HADN'T DISCOVERED **SEX**. THAT FINAL FRONTIER LOOMED AHEAD, TAUNTING ME, MOCKING MY PRIM, CEREBRAL PROGRESS THUS FAR.

FINALLY, AFTER A NIGHT OF DRUNKEN REVELRY, I BROUGHT TWO OF MY NEW FRIENDS BACK TO MY ROOM TO GET H.IGH. I REMEMBER THE PIPE I RIGGED UP OUT OF AN EMPTY TOILET PAPER TUBE, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT.

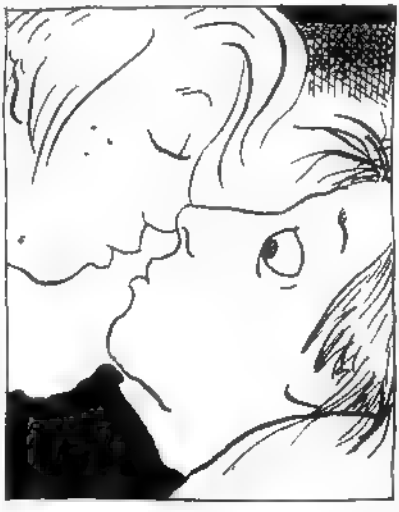
I DON'T REMEMBER BECKY LEAVING, BUT I DO REMEMBER THAT JOAN STAYED.
MIND IF I CRASH HERE? IT'S SO LATE.

I TURNED OFF THE LIGHT. WE REMOVED OUR JEANS AND GOT INTO MY SINGLE BED. STILL IN MY BRA AND WOOL SWEATER, I WAS PROFOUNDLY UNCOMFORTABLE.


AS WE LAY THERE, I BEGAN TO **SHIVER** UNCONTROLLABLY.
JEEZ, THIS IS WEIRD MUST BE THAT GRAIN ALCOHOL..

THE WHOLE BED BEGAN TO SHAKE, BANGING AGAINST THE WALL.
WHAT'S WRONG?
CHATTER
THUMPA THUMP!

JOAN TRIED TO SOOTHE ME, BUT WHEREVER SHE TOUCHED ME, I WAS UNBEARABLY **TICKLISH**.
WHA HA HA!


EVENTUALLY, I RELAXED A BIT AND WE KISSED.

SHE SEEMED TO KNOW WHAT SHE WAS DOING, AND GOT US BOTH UNDRESSED.

UNH.

SNAP!

TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, I REMEMBER VERY LITTLE OF WHAT FOLLOWED, EXCEPT THAT SHE WENT DOWN ON ME...

I'M DYING!

.. AND THAT I HAD ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA HOW TO TOUCH HER.

JEEZ, WHAT'S THIS RUBBERY PART?

SHE SLEPT, BUT I LAY AWAKE ALL NIGHT, PINNED BETWEEN HER AND THE WALL. AT 9 O' CLOCK, SHE GOT UP AND LEFT AFTER A BRIEF CHAT.

SO, D'YOU WANNA COME TO BRUNCH?

UM.. NO THANKS

UNFAMILIAR WITH THE PROTOCOL OF SUCH SITUATIONS, I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW CHURLISH MY REFUSAL WAS. (IN SPITE OF THIS, JOAN AND I EVENTUALLY BECAME LOVERS.)

THAT MORNING I WANTED TO BE ALONE TO SAVOR MY EXQUISITELY JARRING SENSATIONS. I FELT DEBAUCHED AND EXULTANT, MELANCHOLY AND HOPEFUL.

GUESS I'M REALLY A LESBIAN NOW.

I WISH I HAD A MORE ROMANTIC, LESS DRUG-INDUCED **FIRST TIME** FOR YOU.

BUT I'VE TOLD THE TRUE STORY.

MY OWN HUMBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THAT EPIC TALE OF COLLECTIVE SELF-REVELATION THAT MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS HAVE BEEN TELLING FOR GENERATIONS.

IT'S AN HONOR, IT REALLY IS.

THANKS FOR DROPPING BY.

COME OUT AGAIN.

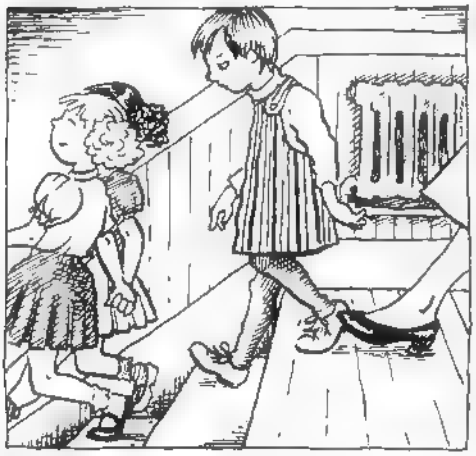
CIAO.

the POWER of PRAYER

UNTIL THE SPRING OF SECOND GRADE, I WAS A CAREFREE, GODLESS CHILD. THE WORLD WAS MY OYSTER.

THEN ONE DAY AT SCHOOL, THE TEACHER DIVIDED OUR CLASS BY SEX.

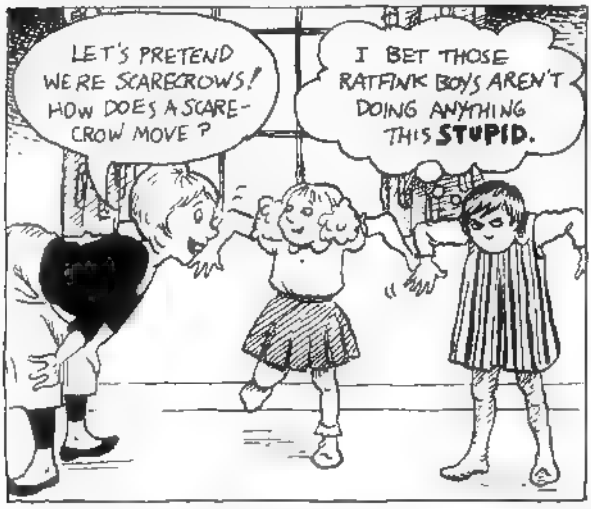
NOT EVEN MY WORST SUSPICIONS PREPARED ME FOR WHAT WAS TO FOLLOW.



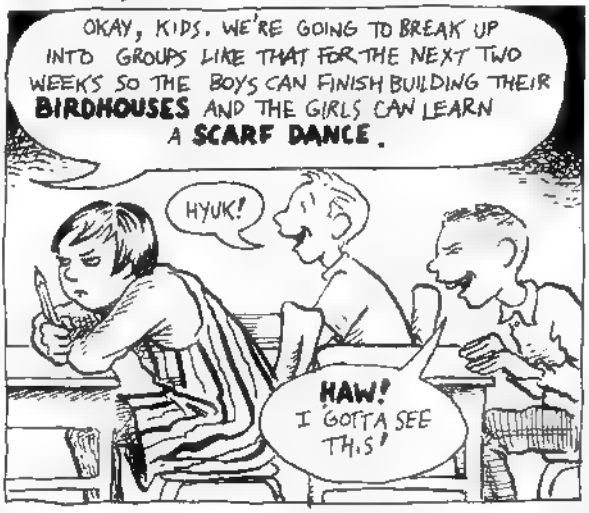
OKAY, GIRLS! LET'S ALL TAKE OFF OUR SHOES AND PUT THEM NEATLY AGAINST THE WALL. MISS MOODLER IS OUR NEW MODERN DANCE TEACHER.
GULP
POP! MISSS CRACKLE

FOLLOW ME IN A CIRCLE, GIRLS! HOW DOES THIS MUSIC MAKE YOU FEEL? SHOW IT IN HOW YOU MOVE! SENSE THE RHYTHM.
HORRORSTRUCK, I REALIZED I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO COMPLY WITH THEIR DEMENTED SCHEME.
HURRY UP, ALISON.

I WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING SINGLED OUT FOR SOME EVEN **WORSE** FATE.

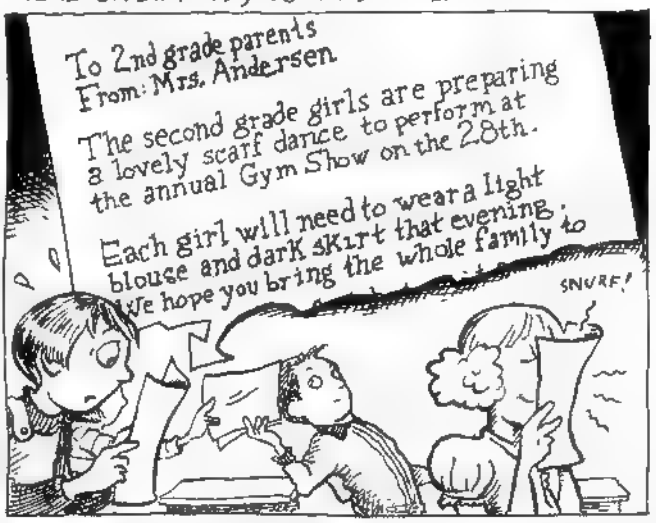


BACK IN THE CLASSROOM, I THOUGHT MY HUMILIATION WAS OVER... BUT I WAS WRONG.


OKAY, KIDS. WE'RE GOING TO BREAK UP INTO GROUPS LIKE THAT FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS SO THE BOYS CAN FINISH BUILDING THEIR **BIRDHOUSES** AND THE GIRLS CAN LEARN A **SCARF DANCE**.
HYUK!
HAW! I GOTTA SEE THIS!

ALL THAT WEEK, I ENDURED THIS ASSAULT ON MY DIGNITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION.

BUT FINALLY THEY WENT TOO FAR. ONE DAY WE WERE WERE GIVEN NOTES TO TAKE HOME.


To 2nd grade parents
From: Mrs. Andersen
The second grade girls are preparing a lovely scarf dance to perform at the annual Gym Show on the 28th.
Each girl will need to wear a light blouse and dark skirt that evening. We hope you bring the whole family to
SNURF!

FRIGHTENED, I CONCOCTED A SHORT-RANGE SOLUTION TO MY PLIGHT.

I WENT STRAIGHT TO MY ROOM AFTER SCHOOL AND CHANGED FROM MY GIRL COSTUME INTO MY REGULAR CLOTHES.

AFTER POCKETING THE TEACHER'S NOTE, I PICKED UP A TROWEL FROM THE GARAGE AND SET OFF FOR THE WOODS.

AT THE ABANDONED RAILROAD TRACKS, I STOPPED AND DUG A DEEP HOLE...

TORE THE NOTE INTO AS MANY PIECES AS I POSSIBLY COULD...

... AND BURIED THEM.

I WAS GIDDY WITH RELIEF.

THE NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, I HAD A BAD SCARE.

ALISON, ARE YOU LEARNING A DANCE IN SCHOOL?

SOMEONE'S MOTHER MUST HAVE SPILLED THE BEANS.

I PLAYED IT COOL, AND SHE DIDN'T SUSPECT A THING.

UM.. NO.

OH.

CLINKETY CLACK

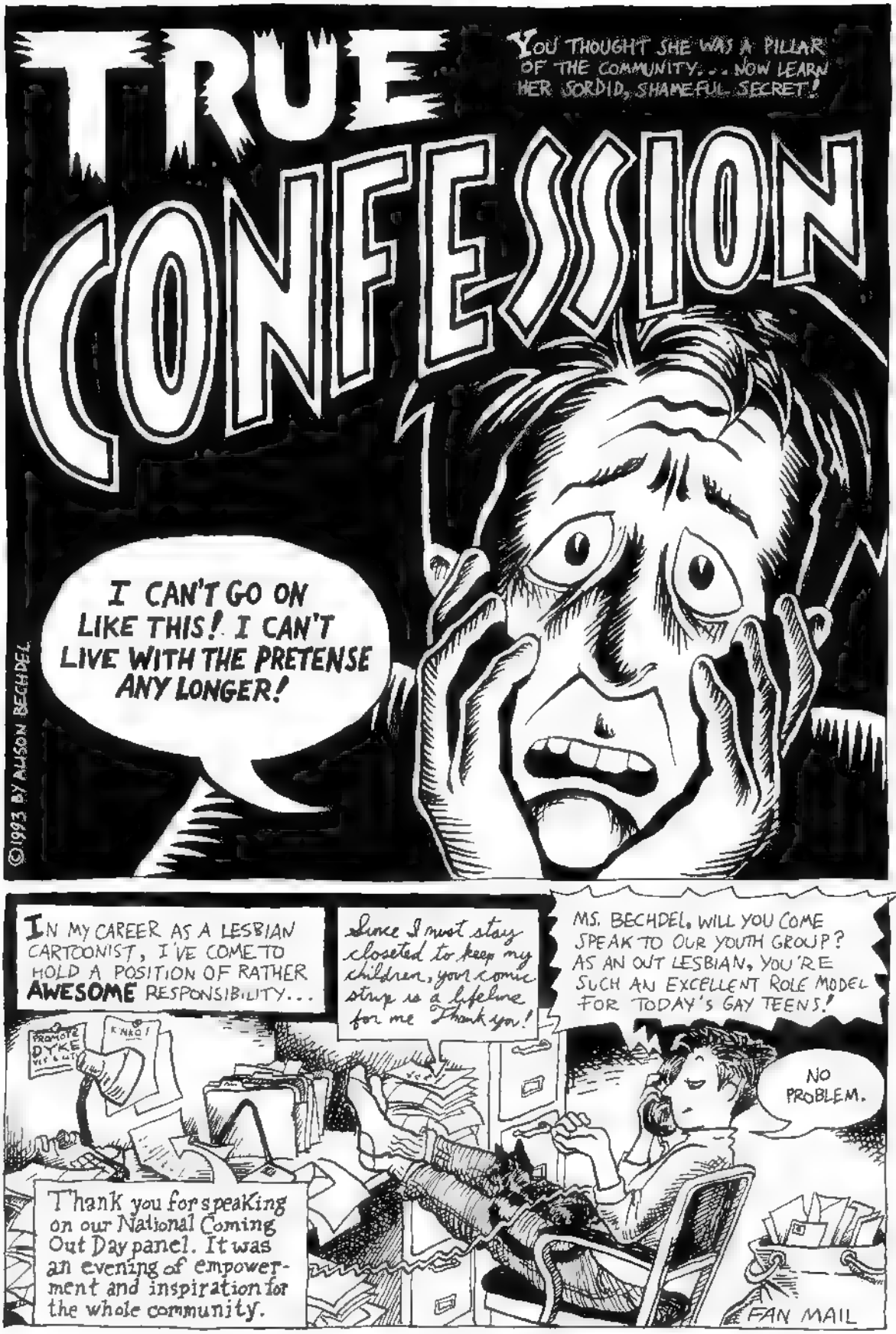
BUT THE DAY OF THE GYM SHOW WAS FAST ENCROACHING. DESPERATE NOW, I HOPED FOR A MIRACLE.

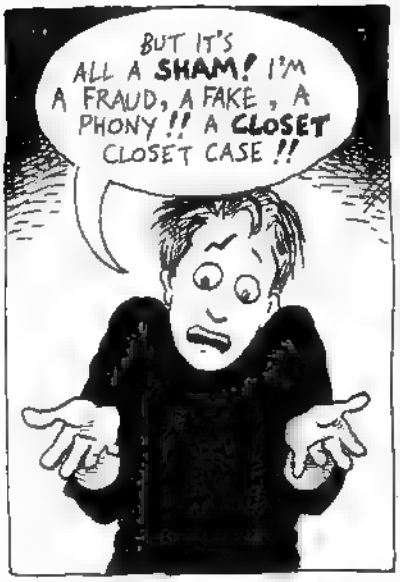
ON SATURDAY, I ATTENDED MY REGULAR WEEKLY CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS. I HAD NEVER PAID MUCH ATTENTION BEFORE. IT ALL SEEMED SO ABSTRACT.

WHAT IF A BABY DIES BEFORE IT'S BAPTIZED?

WELL, TOMMY, SINCE THE BABY HAS ORIGINAL SIN, IT WILL **BURN** IN **HELL.**

BUT THAT MORNING, CATHOLIC DOCTRINE FELL INTO PLACE FOR ME.
NOW, WHAT MUST WE DO TO GO TO HEAVEN?
GET BAPTIZED AND SAY OUR PRAYERS!
THE NIGHT BEFORE THE GYM SHOW, I SAT UP IN BED SAYING A HUNDRED "OUR FATHERS."
.. ANDELIVERUSFROMEVILAMENJOUR FATHERWHOARTINHEAVENHALLOWEDBE
Kids! SELL SEEDS AND WIN PRIZES!
I TICKED THEM OFF ON THE BACK OF A COMIC BOOK.
AND I AWOKE THE NEXT DAY WITH DIVINE INSPIRATION.
I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD. MY STOMACH HURTS.
MIRACULOUSLY, IT WORKED.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU ANYWAY?
THE SITTER
EARACHE.
YOO HOO! MR. GREEN-JEANS!
AND EVEN MORE MIRACULOUSLY, WHEN MY MOTHER RETURNED FROM TAKING MY BROTHERS TO THE GYM SHOW THAT NIGHT, SHE DIDN'T MENTION MY CLASSMATES' LITTLE PERFORMANCE.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
BETTER, I THINK.
YES, I HAD BEEN DELIVERED FROM THE SCARF DANCE. BUT SOMEHOW I COULDN'T RECAPTURE MY FORMER CAREFREE ABANDON.
BZZZT
AFTER ALL, GOD ONLY KNEW WHAT FURTHER EVILS THIS LIFE HELD IN STORE.
JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, I SAID ANOTHER HUNDRED PRAYERS BEFORE I LAY DOWN AND SLEPT.


TRUE CONFESSION
YOU THOUGHT SHE WAS A PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY... NOW LEARN HER SORDID, SHAMEFUL SECRET!
I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS! I CAN'T LIVE WITH THE PRETENSE ANY LONGER!
© 1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL
IN MY CAREER AS A LESBIAN CARTOONIST, I'VE COME TO HOLD A POSITION OF RATHER AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY...
Since I must stay closeted to keep my children, your comic strip is a lifeline for me. Thank you!
MS. BECHDEL, WILL YOU COME SPEAK TO OUR YOUTH GROUP? AS AN OUT LESBIAN, YOU'RE SUCH AN EXCELLENT ROLE MODEL FOR TODAY'S GAY TEENS!
NO PROBLEM.
PROMOTE DYKE
KNAO!
Thank you for speaking on our National Coming Out Day panel. It was an evening of empowerment and inspiration for the whole community.
FAN MAIL


BUT IT'S ALL A **SHAM!** I'M A FRAUD, A FAKE, A PHONY!! A **CLOSET** CLOSET CASE!!

SURE, I'M OUT WHEN IT'S CONVENIENT...
IDAHO WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL
SCREAM BOX

BUT IN THE REAL WORLD, I'M CHICKENSHIT.
UH OH! I'D BETTER PUT ON MY SWEATSHIRT!
MALL-O-RAMA
PEOPLE LIKE US BOOKS
QUEER

I DON'T EVEN HAVE A PINK TRIANGLE ON MY CAR!
DON'T WANNA MESS UP TH' PAINT JOB.
STALKER
HONK IF YOU ♥ JESUS

AND WHILE MY CARTOON CHARACTERS ARE VERY POLITICALLY ACTIVE...
C'MON, MO! WE'RE GOING DOWN-TOWN TO PROTEST RACISM, SEXISM, AND IMPERIALISM!
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, GINGER! 2-4-6-8! DOWN WITH TH' MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX!

... IN MY PERSONAL LIFE, I **SHIRK** SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY!
TUESDAY WE'RE PICKETING THE STORE OWNED BY THOSE HOMO-PHOBIC FUNDAMENTAL-ISTS. WILL YOU BE THERE?
UM... MAYBE.
CONFRONTATION IS SO STRESSFUL

BUT WAIT! IT GETS WORSE THAN THESE MERE **SINS** OF **OMISSION**. UNLIKE THE **AVERAGE** WAGE-EARNER, I CAN'T CHAT TO PEOPLE ABOUT MY JOB WITHOUT COMING OUT TO THEM...
WHAT DO YOU DO?
UH-OH... FOUR HOURS TO CHICAGO, AND SHE LOOKS RELIGIOUS.

SO I LIE!
UH... I'M A FREELANCE ILLUSTRATOR. YEAH.
OH, HOW NICE. DO YOU EVER WATCH "HOUR OF POWER?" THAT'S THE CHURCH I BELONG TO.
I'M A REAL TRAITOR TO MY PEOPLE.
...AND GENERAL SCHWARZKOPF JUST CAME AND SPOKE TO US. WHAT A WONDERFUL MAN!
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY EXCITING.
IT DOESN'T TAKE A HERO
SHE HAD A SIGNED COPY
I DON'T LIKE BEING DISHONEST. BUT THE TRUTH JUST SEEMS TOO COMPLICATED FOR SOME PEOPLE...
ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR TRIP. YOU SEEM LIKE A VERY NICE YOUNG MAN.
TAKE MY RELATIVES, FOR EXAMPLE! HAH! BET YOU ASSUMED A BIG-TIME LESBO LIKE ME WOULD BE OUT TO HER WHOLE FAMILY. DIDN'T YOU?
HI, AUNT JANE! THIS IS JUDY, MY FRIEND FROM COLLEGE!
1981
HI, AUNT JANE! MEET SYLVIA, MY NEW ROOMMATE IN THE CITY!
1983
AUNT JANE! THIS IS MY PAL LOUISE, WHO I'M MOVING ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO ROOM WITH!
1985
HI, AUNT JANE! MEET LILLIAN. SHE NEEDED A HOUSEMATE SO I MOVED BACK EAST TO HELP HER OUT!
1990
AUNT JANE FIGURED IT OUT EVENTUALLY, NO THANKS TO ME... AND NOW SHE'S SUPPORTIVE, TOO, IN HER WAY. BUT EVEN SO, I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO ACTUALLY COME OUT TO HER...
WHERE'S THAT NICE LILLIAN YOU BROUGHT HOME LAST CHRISTMAS?
...IF I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT LILLIAN WAS MY LOVER BY TELLING AUNT JANE WE BROKE UP THEN SHE'LL FORM THE ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION THAT LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE UNSTABLE. WOULDN'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN!
UM... SHE GOT A NEW JOB IN, UH... THE YUKON.
BAKING MY HOMOPHOBIC UNCLE'S FAVORITE COOKIES
YES, I'M A DESPICABLE HYPOCRITE. BUT I STILL HAVEN'T TOLD YOU THE WORST.

THIS LILLIAN I MENTIONED... SHE WASN'T OUT TO HER FAMILY... SO WHEN THEY WERE COMING TO VISIT...
PAROXYSM OF SHAME
YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?!
LOOK, WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? JUST TURN A FEW BOOKS AROUND ON THE SHELF, PUT AWAY ANY STUFF THAT'S OBVIOUSLY GAY!
READ MY LIPS
WELL, OKAY. IF YOU INSIST.
ANNUAL LESBIAN FEST
PRIDE DAY
OUT & PROUD FILM SERIES
GET USED TO IT
THE THING WE DO FOR LOVE
safe sex = hot sex
DIKE
LEZ
DYKE
QUEER
SAPPHIST
TRIBADE
BULLDAGGER
DIRE BRAND BOOKS
50 - COUNT 'EM - 50 COPIES OF "STILL MORE DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR"
THERE. NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE TRUE EXTENT OF MY SELF-LOATHING AND INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA, I FEEL MUCH BETTER!
I GUESS CONFESSION REALLY IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL.
DID I MENTION THE NIGHT IN APRIL, 1985 THAT I SPENT BOFFING BEATRICE TERWILLIGER WHILE MY LOVER THOUGHT I HAD AN EMERGENCY SESSION WITH MY THERAPIST? WELL,...

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
Alison Bechdel
HIGH ABOVE THE BUSTLE OF A TRANSITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD IN A MODERATELY SIZED NORTH AMERICAN METROPOLIS
SPARE CHANGE?
THE COLLECTIVE MEMBERS OF THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE ARE PUTTING THE LATEST ISSUE TO BED WITH THEIR USUAL FLAIR AND PROFESSIONALISM
615
10% Tribune
OH MY GOD! THE MESSENGER'S COMING IN FIFTEEN MINUTES AND I CAN'T FIND THE HEADLINE FOR THE FDA ARTICLE! DID YOU THROW IT AWAY?
IN PRODUCTION
I DON'T THINK SO. JUST USE THE ONE FROM LAST ISSUE. HAVE YOU SEEN THE FULL PAGE AD FOR THE BACK COVER ANYWHERE?
IT'S NOT HERE?! OH MY GOD! WE CAN'T RUN IT BLANK! JULIO SAID HE'D BRING IT IN THIS MORNING!
DID I HEAR MY NAME? I-ZA! I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE TRASHY. BUT REALLY! HERE'S THE 97%-LEWD AD
FINALLY! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
PRODUCTION ROOM
©1988 ALISON BECHDEL
UH-OH.
NOW WHAT?
I DON'T THINK WE CAN PRINT THIS AD! IT DOESN'T CONFORM TO OUR GUIDELINES..
WHAT A SHAME. WE SURE CONFORM TO MINE.
WE HAVE TO PRINT IT! WE ONLY HAVE TEN MINUTES! WHY DIDN'T I GO INTO A LESS STRESSFUL FIELD? FUTURES TRADING, MAYBE, OR FIREFIGHTING... WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?!
WHEN IN DOUBT, HAVE A COLLECTIVE MEETING!
RACHEL! ARTHUR! MJ! COME QUICK!
WE CAN'T RUN IT! FULL PAGE IMAGES OF NAKED MEN UPSET THE BALANCE OF GAY TO LESBIAN CONTENT! IT DEFEATS OUR WHOLE PURPOSE!
BUT WE CAN'T BE A PARTY TO CENSORSHIP EITHER, MJ!
AND THEN THERE'S THE FACT THAT IT'S ALREADY PAID FOR!
BUT THIS IS A RESPECTABLE PUBLICATION! WE HAVE TO DRAW THE LINE SOMEWHERE!
THAT'S IT! LIZA! DRAW A FIG-LEAF OR SOMETHING ON HIM!
JUST THEN, A MENACING SPECTER APPEARS AT THE DOOR.
GASP!
PACKAGE FOR PICK UP?
QUICK! LIZA! DO SOMETHING!
FOUR YEARS OF ART SCHOOL AND I'M DRAWING BIKINIS ON NAKED MEN FOR A LIVING.
THUS A CRISIS IS Aaverted, THE COLLECTIVE PROCESS IS UPHELD, AND THE PRESSES KEEP ROLLING. IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR THESE LOYAL COMMUNITY SERVANTS IN THEIR SELFLESS QUEST FOR JOURNALISTIC EXCELLENCE.
I'VE HEARD AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS MAKE GOOD MONEY.
SPARE CHANGE?

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

Alison Bechdel

RINNG

THE TELEPHONE HARMLESS MODERN CONVENIENCE OR TECHNOLOGICAL TOOL OF TORTURE? THE NEWSROOM IS HOPPING AS WE LOOK IN ON OUR COURAGEOUS COLLECTIVE

WHAT DO YOU SAY THIS IS ME, GANG? ANY BETS? CRANK, CREDITOR, OR CRYBABY?

CRANK

YEAH, IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR A CRANK CALL!

HELLO TRIBUNE! CAN I HELP YOU?

THIS IS THE PUBLIC LIBRARY WE'VE BEEN RECEIVING COMPLAINTS THAT YOUR PUBLICATION'S PORNOGRAPHIC AND WE'D LIKE TO CANCEL OUR SUBSCRIPTION IMMEDIATELY! THANK YOU! -CLIK!-

WELL THANK YOU, YOU REPRESSIVE, HOMOPHOBIC FASCIST!

CRANK! WE WERE RIGHT!

NOPE! THAT WAS A GENUINE OBSCENE PHONE CALL FROM THE PUBLIC LIBRARY! WHAT'S THIS WORLD COMING TO?

RINNG

LET IT RING! WE'VE ANSWERED ENOUGH CALLS FOR ONE DAY!

WHAT IF IT'S AN ADVERTISER, ERIC?! HELLO, TRIBUNE!

REPENT, SODOMITE, OR DROWN IN THE LAKE OF FIRE! -CLIK!-

DOESN'T SOUND LIKE AN ADVERTISER

CRANK!

YOUR TURN, LIZA!

AIN'T WE GET THE MACHINE GET IT?

THE MACHINE? LIZA! WHAT IF IT'S A BROTHER OR SISTER IN TROUBLE? SOME POOR SOUL STRUGGLING TO COME OUT? THEY'VE FINALLY SUMMONED THE COURAGE TO DIAL THIS NUMBER TO REACH OUT FOR GUIDANCE FROM THE COMMUNITY...

CLINCH

AND YOU'D LET A MACHINE ANSWER THEM?! ALL THE CRANK CALLS ARE WORTH IT IF WE CAN BE HERE FOR JUST ONE PERSON IN NEED! ISN'T THAT WHAT THIS PAPER IS ABOUT, AFTER ALL?!

RING!

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ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! STOP THE VIOLINS! HELLO TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER!

WELL FINALLY! A REAL PERSON AND NOT A MACHINE! LISTEN, THIS IS THE SECRETARY OF THE GAY AND LESBIAN CRIBBAGE LEAGUE. MY NAME WAS MISSPELLED TWICE IN YOUR LAST ISSUE! HAVEN'T YOU PEOPLE EVER HEARD OF PROOFREADING? BLAH BLAH BLAH

YO MJ! IT'S A CRYBABY ER, I MEAN, A POOR SOUL IN NEED, FOR YOU.

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
Alison Bechdel
AS IF THE SATISFACTION OF HONEST WORK WELL DONE WERE NOT ENOUGH
PAYDAY!
ARTHUR! MY CHECK IS $50 SHORT!
MINE TOO! WHAT'S GOING ON, ARTHUR? I NEED THAT MONEY!
I KNOW, I KNOW! I'M SORRY! WE'RE REALLY STRAPPED RIGHT NOW. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE IT UP TO EVERYONE NEXT WEEK.
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
WHY, ERIC?! WHY DO WE STAY HERE WORKING FOR SUBSISTENCE WAGES WHEN WE COULD BE MAKING FOUR TIMES AS MUCH AT SOME BIG, POLIT CALLY INCORRECT CORPORATION DOWNTOWN!?
FOR THE CAUSE, LIZA, THE CAUSE. REMEMBER? AND BESIDES, THEY'D NEVER LET US DRESS LIKE THIS DOWNTOWN.
OH RIGHT. JUST FORGOT FOR A MINUTE, THAT'S ALL
Y KNOW, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER YOURSELVES LUCKY! HOW MANY GAY PAPERS PAY THEIR STAFF ANYTHING? UNTIL A COUPLE YEARS AGO, I VOLUNTEERED MY TIME HERE AFTER WORKING ALL WEEK AT A STRAIGHT JOB. IT WAS A LABOR OF LOVE!
JEEZ, ARTHUR! HOW PETTY I'VE BEEN! EXPECTING A PAYCHECK IN EXCHANGE FOR WORK! Y KNOW, FROM NOW ON, I'LL DO MY JOB FOR NOTHING!
SURE, JOKE ABOUT IT! BUT AFTER ALL THE YEARS I SPENT IN THE CLOSET AT MY JOB DOWNTOWN, I'M HAPPY TO WORK HERE FOR SOMETHING I CARE ABOUT! YOUR PROBLEM IS, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT BEING IN THE CLOSET IS LIKE!
ARTHUR! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! ISN'T THAT EXACTLY WHAT WE'VE STRUGGLED FOR ALL THESE YEARS?! I THINK IT'S REFRESHING TO HEAR THEM COMPLAIN ABOUT THEIR PAYCHECKS!
YEAH, ARTHUR! YOU SHOULD BE PROUD! THINK OF EACH WHINE AS A TRIBUTE TO YOUR PIONEERING EFFORTS!
GEE, MAYBE AFTER I PAY THE RENT ON MY DAMP WINDOWLESS, ONE ROOM APARTMENT I'LL BE ABLE TO AFFORD A NEW ROACH MOTEL!
AND AFTER I MAKE MY STUDENT LOAN PAYMENT, I MIGHT HAVE CHANGE LEFT OVER FOR THE HOMELESS PEOPLE DOWN ON THE STREET
I SUPPOSE IT'S ILLEGAL TO REQUIRE THAT COLLECTIVE MEMBERS BE AT LEAST FORTY YEARS OLD?
MOST LIKELY. NOT A HALF BAD IDEA, THOUGH.

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
by Alison Bechdel
WHY DO YOU BUY THOSE SILLY FASHION MAGAZINES?
IT'S LUNCH HOUR AT THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE
IT'S AN ADDICTION! I STARTED ON MY MOM'S BEFORE I COULD READ BESIDES, IT'S FASCINATING STUFF! LOOK AT THIS! "ETERNITY" THE PERFUME OF THE 90'S. I GUESS, "PROMISCUITY" IS NOW AN OFFICIAL FASHION "DON'T"
©1983 BY ALISON BECHDEL
TELL ME ABOUT IT, DARLING! ANYONE WHO'S ANYONE IS DEEPLY INTO COMMITMENT THIS SEASON! HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE PERSONALS?
YEAH, IN FACT I'VE BEEN THINKING OF RUNNING ONE YOU SHOULD TOO, LIZA! WE'LL DO IT TOGETHER!
AW, ER, I DUNNO IT SEEMS SO DESPERATE, SOMEHOW
FACE IT, LIZA WE'RE ALL DESPERATE. C'MON, IT'LL BE FUN! WE'LL WRITE YOU UP A GREAT AD!
WE?
SURE, I'M AN EXPERT! HOW'S THIS? "PLUMP, TEMPESTUOUS, ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE L. SEEKS SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PLAYMATE FOR PASSIONATE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND BODILY FLUIDS"
THAT'S BEAUTIFUL, ERIC PURE POETRY NOW HERE'S ONE FOR YOU "SCRAWNY, LONGHAIRED, ADULT CHILD OF WHITE ANGLO SAXON PROTESTANTS, INTO SOY MILK AND CRYSTALS, SEEKS SPACED OUT SPIRITUAL TYPE FOR TRANSCENDENTAL TITILLATION MAYBE MORE"
SLURP!
HMM. I DUNNO. WAS THINKING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF "LEAN, BEARDED SAGITTARIUS"
AND WAS THINKING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF "VOLUPTUOUS, INSPIRED ARTIST"
MAYBE YOU BOTH OUGHTA START THINKING ALONG THE LINES OF THE WANT ADS. I KNOW IT'S EASY TO FORGET, BUT THIS IS A NEWSPAPER ON DEADLINE NOT A RESTAURANT!
YOU SHOULD TAKE OUT AN AD, ARTHUR!
YEAH! "GRUFF, BALDING FATHER FIGURE"
". SEEKS WILLING SLAVES!"

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
#@☆@! HOW CAN AN X ACTO KNIFE DISAPPEAR INTO THIN AIR? HAD IT A SECOND AGO
GOD, M SO STRESSED! MY TH RD CHAKRA .S BLOCKED!
OUCH! FOUND IT! @ *#*!
UH-OH BAD SIGN ERIC'S DOING YOGA. LIZA'S LOSING IT. AND IT'S ONLY 10 AM
NOT AT ALL! CONSIDERING THIS IS THE PRIDE ISSUE, EVERYTHING'S GOING PERFECTLY!
©1990 BY ALISON BECHDEL
GAY PR.DE! HMPH! WHO INVENTED GAY PR DE ANYHOW, THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW
ALL THIS WORK! EVERY YEAR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY GOES BERSERK, AND FOR WHAT? A SILLY PARADE FOR EVERYONE TO SHOW OFF THEIR LEGS AND THEIR NEW LOVERS
YOU KIDS HAVE NO SENSE OF HISTORY! WHERE DO YOU THINK WE'D BE RIGHT NOW WITHOUT GAY PRIDE?!
WELL, I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BE RUINING MY EYESIGHT ON THESE ENDLESS ADS FOR GAY TANNING SALONS AND LESBIAN LAWYERS, THAT'S FOR SURE!
WHAT DO WE HAVE TO BE PROUD OF ANYWAY? THE GOSSIP AND BACKBITING THAT GO ON IN THIS TOWN ALONE WOULD FUEL RONA BARRETT FOR MONTHS!
YEAH GAYS AND LESBIANS ARE JUST AS PETTY AND BIGOTED AND MATERIALISTIC AS EVERYONE ELSE... AS IS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED TO US ALL YEAR LONG.
BUT LIZA, WHAT ABOUT THE WONDERFUL WAYS WE'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE STRAIGHT WORLD? WHAT ABOUT OUR ANDROGYNOUS AND VISIONARY SPIRITUALITY? OUR CREATIVITY? OUR HUNGER FOR JUSTICE?!
OUR CRUISES TO THE BAHAMAS, OUR POLITICAL INFIGHTING, OUR FLESTAWARE COLLECTIONS.
SO WE'RE HUMAN! THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULDN'T BE PROUD OF THE COURAGE AND LOVE THAT MADE THIS MOVEMENT WHAT IT IS TODAY!
IF THE DRAG QUEENS AT THE STONEWALL HAD YOUR ATTITUDE 20 YEARS AGO, WE'D ALL STILL BE IN THE CLOSET, WALLOWING IN REPRESSION & SHAME!
DON'T YOU LOVE TEASING THEM LIKE THIS?
THEY'RE SO CUTE WHEN THEY WAX ELOQUENT!

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
WHERE THE @*&#! IS ER...?!
BUSINESS AND PLEASURE IS IT POLITICALLY CORRECT TO MIX THEM? PERHAPS THE CREW AT THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE CAN SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS BURNING ISSUE!
HI! I'M BACK
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
FINALLY! GOSH, I NEED THE PHOTOS FROM THIS MORNING'S ACT UP DEMO!
I DON'T HAVE THEM YET
OH, SWELL, ERIC! WHERE'VE YOU BEEN ALL DAY? JUST CRUISING IMPASSIONED YOUNG PROTESTERS?!
LIZA, I COULDN'T HELP IT, I
OH, RIGHT! BLAME YOUR HORMONES! WELL WHILE YOU WERE OUT FOOLING AROUND, SOME OF US HAVE BEEN BUSTIN' OUR BUTTS TO GET THIS PAPER OUT!
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, MS HOLIER THAN THOU, I SPENT THE AFTERNOON LANGUISHING IN JAIL FOR THE SAKE OF THIS MISERABLE PAPER! THEY ARRESTED ALL OF US!
BUT YOU WERE JUST TAKING PICTURES! OMIGOD! THE FILM! ERIC, IS THE FILM ALL RIGHT?!
OH, I'M FINE REALLY, LIZA, YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT ME SO MUCH THE FILM'S OKAY I'LL DEVELOP IT RIGHT NOW I NEED TO MAKE A PRINT FOR ROGER BEFORE THIS EVENING, ANYHOW
ROGER?
ONE OF MY IMPASSIONED YOUNG CELLMATES' HE INVITED ME OVER TO LICK STAMPS WITH HIM TONIGHT'
OOH! IS HE A PHILATELIST?
AND IS IT SAFE?
MAILING OUT A FUNDRAISER? I THINK SO. AS LONG AS YOU WEAR THESE LITTLE RUBBER FINGERTIPS!

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel

RACHEL, I NEED THE NAMES OF THESE PLAYERS FOR THE SOFTBALL PHOTO CAPTION
JUST PUT "BUDDIES' STUDS CELEBRATE AFTER WINNING LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP." THEY DON'T WANT THEIR NAMES IN THE PAPER
WHY NOT? THEY'RE THE CHAMPIONS!
I GUESS THEY'RE WORRIED THEIR BOSSES WILL SEE IT AND FIRE THEM
FOR WINNING A SOFTBALL GAME?!
NO, FOR BEING GAY! HONESTLY, SOMETIMES YOU TWO ARE SO NAIVE!
YOU MEAN THESE GUYS ARE IN THE CLOSET?
THEY PROBABLY WORK AT PLACES WHERE IT'S NOT SAFE TO BE OUT. IT'S OUR POLICY TO RESPECT PEOPLE'S ANONYMITY IF THEY REQUEST IT.
THAT BURNS ME UP! WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE?! AFRAID TO HAVE THEIR NAMES IN THE PAPER! AFRAID THEY'LL LOSE THEIR CUSHY LITTLE JOBS!
DON'T THEY UNDERSTAND? IF EVERYONE CAME OUT, WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING!
PARASITES! THAT'S WHAT THEY ARE! THEY LET PEOPLE LIKE US STICK OUR NECKS OUT AND DO ALL THE DIRTY WORK! WHILE WE'RE FIGHTING FOR OUR CIVIL RIGHTS, THEY'RE SITTING BACK IN THEIR JACUZZIS, WATCHING THEIR STOCK PORTFOLIOS EXPAND!
AREN'T YOU BEING A LITTLE HARSH? I MEAN, MAYBE THESE GUYS MAKE FINANCIAL DONATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY. EVERYONE DOESN'T HAVE THE LUXURY OF BEING OUT.
YEAH, IT'S LUXURIOUS, ALL RIGHT! MAKE $14,000 A YEAR FOR THE LUXURY OF BEING OUT ON THE JOB. THE THING IS, COMING OUT ISN'T A LUXURY, IT'S A NECESSITY!
SO, I GUESS YOU FINALLY CAME OUT TO YOUR FOLKS THEN, HUH?
WELL, UM... I'M GOING TO TELL THEM AS SOON AS THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF
LIKE THEIR FUNERALS? C'MON ERIC! PUT YOUR POLITICS WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS!
WHILE YOU'RE WAITING, MAYBE THERE'S AN OPENING FOR YOU ON THE SOFTBALL TEAM!
MOI? ENGAGE IN BRUTAL ATHLETIC ACTIVITY WITH A BUNCH OF MACHO LADDER-CLIMBERS?
THE PROSPECT OF TELLING MY FATHER HIS ONLY SON IS A RADICAL FAERIE PALES IN COMPARISON. GIMME THE PHONE!

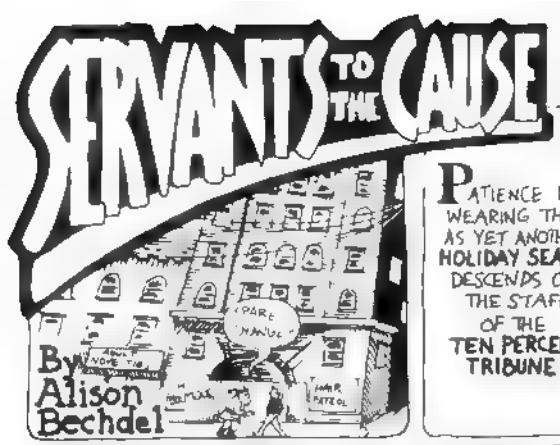
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
GOOD MORNING, A.J.!
WELCOME TO THE TRENCHES. WHAT ARE YOU SO GODDAMNED CHEERFUL ABOUT?
GO AHEAD, ERIC! TRY AND SPOIL MY MOOD! I'M HAPPY AND I'M GONNA STAY THAT WAY
WHAT THE @☆#@! IS THIS?!
?
WHAT'S WHAT?
THIS! THIS. NEANDERTHAL! I NEARLY JUST LOST MY BREAKFAST!
LOCKER ROOM LUST
with LANCE LONG
HE CAME IN THE MAIL THIS MORNING! I THOUGHT HE'D LIVEN UP THE OFFICE!
ERIC, YOU CAN'T PUT THAT UP HERE! IT'S... IT'S OFFENSIVE!
WHY? HE'S A HUNK!
A HUNK OF WHAT IS THE QUESTION
OH, COME ON! THE HUMAN BODY IS A THING OF BEAUTY! SINCE WHEN DID YOU GUYS BECOME PURITANS?
ER.C, I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT NAKED MEN!
HM. YOU'RE R.GHT I GUESS T IS KINDA UNFAIR. HOW 'BOUT WE PUT UP PIX OF NAKED WOMEN TOO?
I DON'T WANNA LOOK AT NAKED WOMEN EITHER!
GAWD! YOU LESBIANS ARE SO REPRESSED!
JUST BECAUSE I DON'T GET A VOYEURISTIC THRILL OUT OF CRASS, COMMERCIALIZED IMAGES OF NAKED PEOPLE DOES NOT MEAN I'M REPRESSED! OUR SEXUALITY IS A SACRED THING, NOT A COMMODITY!
WHERE'ZAT LESBIAN PORN MAGAZINE?
AHA!
BAD BACKS
I DUNNO, M.J. MAYBE ERIC'S RIGHT. MAYBE WE SHOULD LIGHTEN UP. HERE'S A CHARMING COUPLE. LET'S PUT THEM UP NEXT TO LANCE. HE LOOKS LIKE AN ALTAR BOY IN COMPARISON!
OMIGOD! IS THAT ANATOMICALLY POSSIBLE?!
LIZA!
BAD BACKS
UH... MAYBE YOU'RE R.GHT, M.J.! PIN-UPS AREN'T EXACTLY APPROPRIATE IN AN OFFICE SETTING. I'LL TAKE LANCE HOME
JUST LEAVE THESE MATTERS TO ME, M.J. I DIDN'T MINOR IN PSYCHOLOGY FOR NOTHING.

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
IT FELT LIKE JUST ANOTHER WORK DAY AT THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE . UNTIL ERIC ARRIVED
WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?!
IT'S MY ANNETTE FUNICELLO OUTFIT! WHADDAYA THINK?!
I'M SORRY, GIRL . YOU JUST DON'T HAVE THE LEGS
AND WHAT YOU HAVE YOU SHOULDA SHAVED.
NITPICKERS! I NOTICE NONE OF YOU DRESSED FOR HALLOWEEN WHAT KIND OF SELF-RESPECTING QUEERS ARE YOU, ANYWAY?!
·615·
WELL I FOR ONE AM OFFENDED BY YOUR GET UP, ERIC!
JEEZ, MAYBE I SHOULDA SHAVED MY LEGS
DRAG IS OFFENSIVE TO WOMEN! IT MOCKS FEMININE TRAITS AND GLORIFIES THE WAYS WOMEN HAVE BEEN OBJECTIFIED AND OPPRESSED FOR CENTURIES
LIGHTEN UP, MJ! IT'S FUN! IT'S CAMP! IT'S GENDER-FUCK! WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE SO RIGID?!
IT'S DISRESPECTFUL!
HON NO ONE COULD RESPECT ANNETTE MORE THAN ME! I'VE BEEN DRESSING UP LIKE HER SINCE I WAS FOUR!
BESIDES, WHO SAYS WOMEN ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO GET TO WEAR GARISH MAKE-UP, RIDICULOUS HAIRDOS, AND ABSURD CLOTHING?!
YEAH!
DRAG IS A NOBLE AND ANCIENT FAERIE RITUAL! A RAD CAL SLAP IN THE FACE OF TRADITIONAL PATRIARCHAL VALUES!
HUH. Y KNOW, I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT LIKE THAT
OOOH, GIRLFRIEND! ARE THOSE YOUR TITS OR DID YOU DROP TWO STUFFED MUSHROOMS DOWN YOUR BLOUSE?!!
WHAT? YOU DON'T LIKE MY PATTI LA BELLE?
ON THE OTHER HAND.

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
IT'S THE LULL AFTER DEADLINE AS WE JOIN THE INTREPID STAFF OF THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE...
GODDESS, I WISH I'D START BLEEDING SOON!
ME TOO, RACHEL. YOU'RE A ROYAL PAIN IN THE BUTT WHEN YOU'RE PREMENSTRUAL.
MUST YOU TWO DISCUSS YOUR BODILY FUNCTIONS IN PUBLIC?
WHATSA MATTER, ARTHUR? SQUEAMISH? OR ARE YOU THREATENED BY OUR ELEMENTAL CONNECTION TO THE FORCES OF NATURE?
I JUST THINK THOSE THINGS ARE PERSONAL, THAT'S ALL
YOU'D RATHER WE KEPT OUR SHAMEFUL BIOLOGICAL CYCLES TO OURSELVES, HUH?
I HAVEN'T HEARD YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT THE ENDLESS DISCUSSION OF MALE BODILY FUNCTIONS THAT GOES ON IN THIS OFFICE
OH, SO NOW I'M BEING SEXIST, RIGHT?
ARTHUR, YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE ON THE RAG!
©1985 BY ALISON BECHDEL
HEY, MAYBE YOU ARE ARTHUR! I KNOW I HAVE PMS SOMETIMES!
OH, PUH-LEEZE ERIC!
WELL I DO! MEN'S BODIES HAVE HORMONAL RHYTHMS TOO, Y'KNOW!
I'M SO SURE. YOU GUYS HAVE TO GET IN ON EVERYTHING, DON'T YOU?
HEY, I'M NOT TRYING TO APPROPRIATE YOUR COLLECTIVE FEMALE EXPERIENCE I JUST THINK IT HELPS TO FOCUS ON OUR SIMILARITIES RATHER THAN OUR DIFFERENCES.
UH-OH
WHAT?!
ERIC, YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE AN EXTRA TAMPON I COULD BORROW, WOULD YOU?

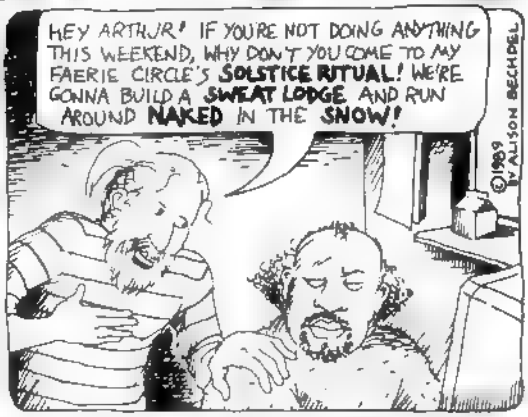
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel



PATIENCE IS WEARING THIN AS YET ANOTHER **HOLIDAY SEASON** DESCENDS ON THE STAFF OF THE **TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE**.

ERIC, HANUKKAH IS **NOT** THE JEWISH VERSION OF CHRISTMAS. THERE **IS** NO JEWISH VERSION OF CHRISTMAS, THANK GOD!
HOW ABOUT A ROUSING PAGAN **SOLSTICE** CHANT, THEN?
RODUCT ON


HEY ARTHUR! IF YOU'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING THIS WEEKEND, WHY DON'T YOU COME TO MY FAERIE CIRCLE'S **SOLSTICE RITUAL!** WE'RE GONNA BUILD A **SWEAT LODGE** AND RUN AROUND **NAKED** IN THE **SNOW!**
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL

I KINDA KNOW HOW ARTHUR FEELS THIS'LL BE THE FIRST CHRISTMAS I HAVEN'T HAD A LOVER. GUESS I'LL GO VISIT MY **FOLKS**
BUMMER! WELL I'D INVITE YOU TO THE **SWEAT LODGE**, BUT

AW, THAT'S OK, ERIC. IT'S **TEMPTING**, THOUGH! SITTING IN A TENT WITH A CROWD OF NAKED, SWEATY GAY MEN WITH PONYTAILS, VERSUS EATING AND DRINKING MYSELF INTO A STUPOR WITH MY MANIACALLY DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY! **TOUGH CHOICE!**
HO. HO. HO.

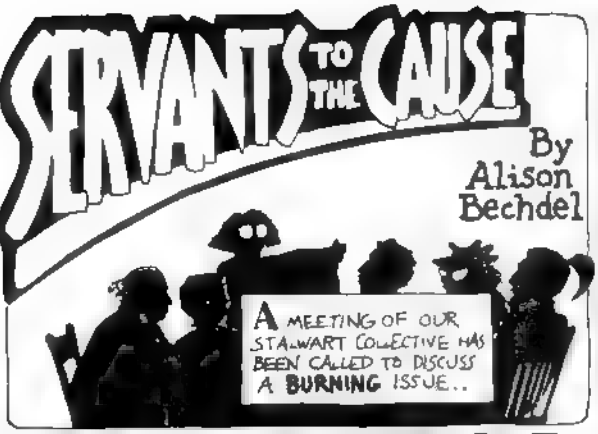
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
WAS NOT!
WAS TOO!
YOU ARE A DOGMATIC, MANHATTING FUNDAMENTALIST!
AND YOU HAVE THE POLITICAL SENSIBILITY OF A CALVIN KLEIN UNDERWEAR AD!
UH-OH PERSONALITY CONFLICT!
WHOSE TURN IS IT TO FACILITATE?
ARTHUR'S!
OH NO IT'S NOT! I JUST FACILITATED THAT HEATED DEBATE BETWEEN ERIC AND RACHEL OVER SERIAL COMMAS!
AND RIGHT AFTER THAT, I MEDIATED MJ AND LIZA'S DISCUSSION ON WHY WE RUN FREE ADS FOR OFF OUR BACKS AND NOT ON OUR BACKS.
WELL, IT CAN'T BE MY TURN IT WAS ONLY LAST WEEK THAT I NEGOTIATED ERIC AND JULIO'S DISPUTE OVER HOW TO CROP THAT GRAPHIC FOR THE BEEFY BUNS CALENDAR REVIEW!
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
DON'T LOOK AT ME! I HANDLED THE LITTLE FRACAS OVER NEATNESS STANDARDS JUST THIS MORNING! REMEMBER?
WAIT, MAYBE IT'S MY TURN! I HAVEN'T FACILITATED SINCE THE BIG FUSS OVER WHETHER COVERING THE GAY RODEO WOULD OFFEND THE ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS!
DON'T BE SILLY! YOU CAN'T FACILITATE YOUR OWN CONFLICT!
OH ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO IT! WHAT ARE YOU FIGHTING ABOUT?
GEE WAS IT THE SUGGESTIVE COPY FOR THAT REAL ESTATE AD?
NO THAT WAS FRIDAY MAYBE IT WAS MY EDITING ON THE INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER OF THE WET JOCKEY SHORTS CONTEST?
DO YOU THINK IT WOULD VIOLATE THE BASIC TENETS OF THE COLLECTIVE PROCESS IF WE JUST SMACKED THEIR HEADS TOGETHER?

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND, ERIC?
MR. JAVA
OH, IT WAS SHEER ECSTASY IF HANGING OUT AT THE LAUNDROMAT, SCRUBBING THE BATHROOM, AND WATCHING MTV BY YOURSELF IS YOUR IDEA OF A HOT TIME.
SOUNDS LIKE BLISS COMPARED TO BABYSITTING A DEMONIC TWO YEAR-OLD WHILE HIS MOMS SPENT A ROMANTIC WEEKEND IN A HOTEL
WELL I HAD A GREAT TIME! NANCY AND I SPENT ALL DAY SUNDAY IN BED... WE HAVEN'T DONE THAT IN YEARS.
I SPENT THE WHOLE WEEKEND IN BED! REMEMBER BRUNO, THE AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR I MET AT THE TANNING SALON?
WHO ASKED YOU GUYS?!
YEAH! IF WE WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR PATHETIC LITTLE SEX LIVES, WE WOULDA SAID SO!
I DON'T GET IT, ERIC! WHAT'S A COUPLE OF SMART, SEXY, FAST TRACK PROFESSIONALS LIKE US DOING SINGLE?
FANTA-SIZING A LOT
SLAM!
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!
I'M SERIOUS! IF YOU VISUALIZE THE PERFECT LOVER, THEY'LL COME TO YOU!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN TO ANOTHER NEW AGE SEMINAR
SCOFF IF YOU LIKE! WE'LL SEE WHO GETS LAID FIRST!
ERIC, THINGS JUST DON'T WORK THAT WAY!
YOU'RE NEVER GONNA GET ANYWHERE WITH A NEGATIVE BELIEF SYSTEM LIKE THAT!
WELL EXCU-USE ME! HOW BOUT THIS? MY PERFECT LOVER WILL BE GENEROUS, GIVING, UNSELFISH
YEAH! GOOD! YOU GOT IT!
...AND INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY. SO, HOW LONG TILL SHE SHOWS UP?
WHEN SHE DOES, I HOPE SHE DUMPS YOU FOR HER ASTROLOGER.

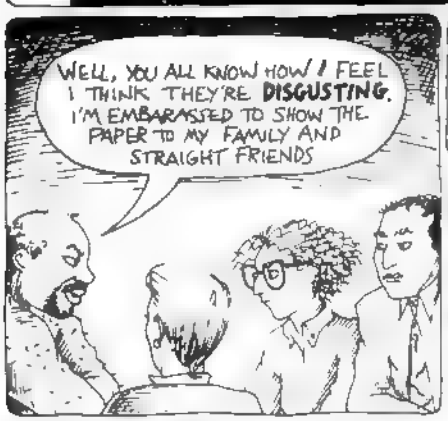
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
NOT AGAIN!
THINGS HAVE BEEN SUSPICIOUSLY CALM LATELY IN THE DUTY-BOUND OFFICES OF THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE...
WHAT?
SOME GAY MAN COMPLAINING ABOUT A WOMEN ONLY CRAFT FAIR... WHINING ABOUT BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. DIDN'T WE HASH THIS ALL OUT YEARS AGO?
HEY, I LIKED THAT ARTICLE! I THOUGHT HE HAD SOME GOOD POINTS!
AAARGH!
CMON! AREN'T WOMEN ABOVE THAT KIND OF EXCLUSION? I MEAN, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WOMEN ONLY SPACE AND ALL MALE CLUBS?!
YOU HAVE A POINT THERE, JULIO
IT'S NOT THE SAME AT ALL! MEN TAKE UP MORE THAN THEIR SHARE OF SPACE ALREADY! IT'S CRUCIAL TO WOMEN'S SELF-EMPOWERMENT THAT WE BE ABLE TO FOCUS ON EACH OTHER WITHOUT A LOT OF MEN SOAKING UP ALL OUR ENERGY!
HMM... YOU HAVE A POINT THERE, M.J
BUT DOESN'T IT GIVE MEN MORE POWER THAN THEY ALREADY HAVE TO MAKE SUCH A BIG DEAL OUT OF THEIR PRESENCE? WHAT IF WE LET THEM IN, THEN IGNORED THEM?
OH, COME OFF IT, LIZA! HOW COULD YOU IGNORE A BUNCH OF MEN AT A WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL? WOULD YOU DANCE NAKED OR GO TO A WORKSHOP ON WRITING EROTICA?!
WELL
WHY NOT?! I THINK IT'D BE GREAT! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DANCE NAKED AT A WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL!
ERIC, YOU MAY BE ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS, AND GODDESS KNOWS YOU'RE MORE HIGHLY EVOLVED THAN A LOT OF MEN BUT I'D FEEL WEIRD WITH YOU AT A FESTIVAL!
WELL! WELL THAT REALLY HURTS, LIZA!
GET OVER IT, ERIC SOMETIMES THE POLITICAL IS JUST MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PERSONAL
FINE WITH ME! YOUR LOSS, AS ANYONE WILL TELL YOU WHO'S EVER SEEN MY ISADORA DUNCAN IMPERSONATION!

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

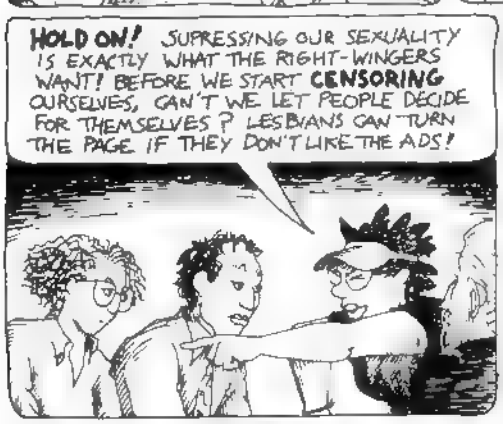
By Alison Bechdel



...AS WE'VE BEEN CARRYING MORE PHONE SEX ADS, A LOT OF OUR READERS HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING. WE HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION
DIAL
Lick-A-BUTT
976 JOKE SNAP
976 PHALLUS
976 BEAVER
976 BEAVER



GIMME A BREAK! WHO ARE WE PUBLISHING THIS PAPER FOR?! ARTHUR'S FAMILY AND STRAIGHT FRIENDS? JEEZ! BESIDES, PHONE SEX IS SAFE SEX! WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO RUN THOSE ADS!


HOLD ON! SUPRESSING OUR SEXUALITY IS EXACTLY WHAT THE RIGHT-WINGERS WANT! BEFORE WE START CENSORING OURSELVES, CAN'T WE LET PEOPLE DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES? LESBIANS CAN TURN THE PAGE IF THEY DON'T LIKE THE ADS!

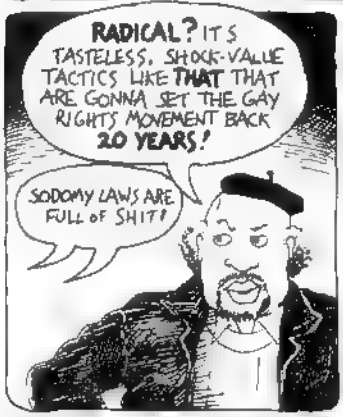
AHEM COULD WE INTRODUCE THE VOICE OF REASON FOR A MOMENT?
I THINK YOU SHOULD ALL KNOW THAT 25% OF OUR TOTAL AD REVENUE COMES FROM THE PHONE LINES.
F. MAN. INC. REPORT

YEAH. ME TOO! 1-976 GAY CASH. THEN LIZA AND ME WILL BUY THIS PAPER AND PRINT WHATEVER WE WANT TO!
DON'T WORRY WE'LL LET YOU ALL STAY ON AS PROOFREADERS

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel

SUCK MY DICK! LICK MY CLIT!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON IN THERE?
THEY'VE BEEN GOING ON LIKE THAT ALL DAY IT'S THE LATEST ACT-UP SLOGAN THEY THINK THEY'RE BEING RADICAL.
QUEERS INVADE ATLANTA


RADICAL? IT'S TASTELESS, SHOCK-VALUE TACTICS LIKE THAT THAT ARE GONNA SET THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT BACK 20 YEARS!
SODOMY LAWS ARE FULL OF SHIT!

I GUESS YOU PROBABLY DON'T APPROVE OF SIMULATED SEX ACTS AS AN EFFECTIVE FORM OF PUBLIC PROTEST EITHER
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND IT! WHAT HAVE WE COME TO?
OOH! DID WE COME?
GCS

C'MON ARTHUR! IT'S TIME TO SHAKE THIS EROTOPHOBIC SOCIETY UP A LITTLE. SEX IS NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF
YEAH! WE'RE NOT GONNA BE FURTIVE AND SECRETIVE ABOUT IT ANYMORE! A LITTLE SYMBOLIC PUBLIC SEX IS A POWERFUL CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING TOOL! WE NEED TO SEE MORE PEOPLE LOVING EACH OTHER!

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
SAME TO YOU!
NO LUCK?
NO HER MANAGER SAYS IF WE WANTED AN INTERVIEW WE SHOULDA SET IT UP AHEAD OF TIME
BUT WE TRIED! NO ONE WOULD RETURN OUR CALLS!
ERIC, WHAT'S WITH THE COWBOY DRAG? YOU LOOK ALMOST BUTCH.
WE'RE GOING TO THE J.T. CHAPRIDGE CONCERT TONIGHT. YOU KNOW, THAT HOT NEW COUNTRY-WESTERN SINGER
WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO SET UP AN INTERVIEW WITH HER FOR WEEKS, BUT NO DICE.
J.T. CHAPRIDGE! WHAT A HEARTTHROB! SHE HAD INTERVIEWS IN BOTH THE DISTRESS AND THE WEEKLY VOICE TODAY! SHE'S SUCH A DYKE!
WHAT? DID SHE SAY SO?
OF COURSE NOT! BUT LOOK AT HER! AND IF YOU READ BETWEEN THE LINES, YOU CAN JUST TELL!
THAT REALLY PISSES ME OFF! I'M TIRED OF READING BETWEEN THE LINES! HALF HER ADORING, RECORD BUYING PUBLIC IS QUEER! SHE COULD AT LEAST GIVE US AN INTERVIEW!
DREAM ON, LIZA! YOU THINK THAT BIG RECORD LABEL SHE'S WITH IS GONNA LET HER TALK TO THE GAY & LESBIAN PRESS? THEY DON'T WANNA RISK RECORD SALES! BESIDES, WE KNOW SHE'S A LESBIAN!
ISN'T THAT WHAT REALLY MATTERS?
NO! JUST FOR ONCE I'D LIKE TO SEE A FAMOUS PERSON HAVE THE PRIDE AND INTEGRITY TO COME OUT PUBLICLY!
WELL I DON'T CARE IF SHE WEARS A COAT MADE OF BABY SEALS AND OWNS STOCK IN A NUCLEAR BOMB FACTORY! SHE'S SEXY AS HELL
YOU'RE PATHETIC, RACHEL
WHY DON'T YOU PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS AND GIVE HER YOUR TICKET, THEN, MS PRIDE AND INTEGRITY?
WHY DON'T YOU DRINK A SIX PACK OF COORS AND GO ROPE A STEER, BUCKAROO?

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
THANK GOD! YOU'RE ALL STILL HERE!
ERIC IS SUFFERING FROM A TOUCH OF ASSIMILATION ANXIETY
I HAD THE MOST HORRIBLE DREAM LAST NIGHT!
NOT THE RECURRENT NIGHTMARE WHERE YOU JUMP OUT OF THE CAKE AT THE AMERICAN LEGION BANQUET HALL?
NEWSSTAND
NO... THIS WAS MUCH, MUCH WORSE... IT HAPPENED IN THE FUTURE, A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.. AND HOMOPHOBIA HAD BECOME OBSOLETE!
BUT THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT DREAM!
OOOH, IT WAS JUST TERRIBLE! IT WAS TOTALLY ACCEPTABLE TO BE GAY, OR LESBIAN, OR BISEXUAL, OR WHATEVER! NOBODY CARED!
THERE WERE TV SITCOMS ABOUT MARRIED GAY COUPLES AND THEIR CHILDREN! OPENLY LESBIAN TENNIS STARS CAVORTED ON WHEATIES BOXES!
WHAT'S SO HORRIBLE ABOUT THAT?
THERE WERE NO MORE GAY BARS OR CLUBS BECAUSE PEOPLE COULD SOCIALIZE ANYWHERE THEY LIKED WITHOUT BEING HARASSED!
ALL THE GAY CHURCHES AND SYNAGOGUES AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HAD FOLDED BECAUSE THERE WAS NO NEED FOR THEM ANYMORE!
AND WORST OF ALL, THERE WERE NO MORE LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSPAPERS OR PUBLISHERS BECAUSE THE MAINSTREAM PRESS STARTED PRINTING ALL THE QUEER WRITERS!
JEEZ, THAT IS PRETTY SCARY.
IT DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD TO ME! AFTER ALL, ISN'T THAT WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR? THE RIGHT TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?
WHAT?! EXCUSE ME, BUT ARE WE IN THE SAME POLITICAL MOVEMENT?
MAYBE YOU WANNA BE A SITCOM CHARACTER, ARTHUR, BUT THE LAST THING I WANT IS TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!
SOMEHOW, I DON'T THINK YOU TWO HAVE ANY THING TO WORRY ABOUT

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SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
KOFF!
SWIG
ACT UP
ERIC, UH. MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO SEE A DOCTOR ABOUT THAT COUGH
HACK!
YEAH, SURE ...MAKE SOMEBODY'S PORSCHE PAYMENT JUST SO HE CAN TELL ME TO TAKE TWO ASPIRINS. NO THANKS.
LOOK, UM. THIS MIGHT BE INVADING YOUR SPACE, BUT YOU'VE HAD A COUGH FOR TWO WEEKS NOW I MEAN, I'M JUST KIND OF CONCERNED
OKAY, LIZA. LET'S JUST GET RIGHT DOWN TO IT. DON'T THINK I HAVEN'T NOTICED ALL THE WORRIED LOOKS EVERYONE'S BEEN GIVING ME AROUND HERE! JUST SAY IT!
HEY, RELAX! I CARE ABOUT YOU! OF COURSE I'M WORRIED!
WORRIED ABOUT WHAT? JUST SAY IT!
I'M WORRIED YOU'RE GONNA GET AIDS! OKAY?
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU'RE INVADING MY SPACE
LOOK, THIS IS NOT MY FAVORITE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION EITHER, BUT YOU'RE MY FRIEND AND I THINK WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT IT. I MEAN, ARE YOU WORRIED? D'YOU THINK YOU'RE AT RISK? HAVE YOU BEEN, LIKE, UM TESTED?
YES, YES, AND NO ENOUGH TALK?
YOU. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TESTED? BUT DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW?
NO, FRANKLY, I DON'T
ARE YOU IN SOME KIND OF DENIAL OR WHAT? WHAT IF YOU'RE POSITIVE? THERE'S DRUGS YOU CAN TAKE! IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO HIV!
GREAT. NOW EVERYBODY WHO READS THE NEWSPAPERS IS AN AIDS EXPERT. LISTEN, I HAVE MY REASONS, AND I AM NOT, I REPEAT, NOT IN DENIAL!
STAY TUNED!

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IN MEMORIUM

Jerry Mills, 41, creator of the internationally published gay comics strip, "Poppers," died January 28, 1993, of complications from a long battle with HIV. He is survived by his longtime life partner, Sal Lucarello.

"Poppers" featured the Los Angeles-based comic/erotic exploits of Billy (a dumb blond party boy who never had to work hard at love, life, or looks), his pal Yves Arden (a play on the classic movie roles of actress Eve Arden who was typecast as a tragic wisecracking sidekick to the main love interest), their third wheel André laFayette (soul child of Grace Jones; cool wise, and with fabulous good taste), and Buster Crab (a louse with an attitude living in Billy's crotch).

"Poppers" began April 1982 in *In Touch Magazine for Men*, a gay monthly featuring photo spreads of nude valley dudes and erotic short stories. Jerry was working there in the subscriptions department when then editor John Calendo encouraged him to create a regular sex comic to sandwich between the buns and the beefcake.

Drawing a sex comic during the dusk of the sexual revolution under the advent of AIDS pulled Jerry between the pressure of pleasing the publisher's dictates against material perceived as being sex negative, and the changing realities of the AIDS pandemic that tore apart the sexual fantasy which sold *In Touch.*

Reading through Jerry's strips in succession is a chilling diary of the holocaust that exploded within the Gay community during the 1980's. Against odds that would suck dry most creative energy wells, Jerry created stories that were funny, sexual, and totally relevant to their times.

As an artist, Jerry continuously honed his abilities, refining his line and skill to sharp comic strip perfection. This evolving growth imbued a life to Jerry's iconoclastic cast of characters that few master cartoonists have achieved.

In the mid-1980's, "Poppers" was translated and published in the French gay weekly magazine, *Gai Pied Hebdo*, and in the Japanese monthly magazine, *Barazoko.* ***Gay Comix #6*** cover-featured the cast of "Poppers," while ***Gay Comix #9*** (both still available) collected the cream of Jerry's early "Poppers" strips.

While at *In Touch*, Jerry contributed numerous spot illustrations and alternative comic plugs, and wrote an article on gays in the comics (#85, 11/'83), a history of early male physique magazines (#97, 11/'84), and an interview with gay cartoonist Howard Cruse (#114, 5'86). Jerry also wrote an 8-page history of gays in comics for the first *Meatmen* book published by Leyland Publications in 1986.

In Touch laid Jerry off in 1987. The magazine was suffering from recession, lawsuits, shrinking advertising base, and America's rabid conservative swing into right-wing horror shows. Jerry then got a job in the classifieds department at *Advocate MEN*, which then sporadically printed "Poppers" until editorial indecision and growing health complications forced Jerry to lay down his pens in his prime.

Jerry appeared for a ***Gay Comics*** signing at the Different Light bookstore in West Hollywood in early 1992, enjoying visiting with his fans and fellow cartoonists. Jerry died before he was able to seriously interest any publishing house to print the complete anthology collection of "Poppers."

Sometimes Jerry's experiences so closely mirrored my own in both life and the comic world that I feel a unique kinship with him which is now a hole cut right through me. The following is from Jerry's introduction to *Meatmen* #1:

"Gay comic artists face the quandary of how to deal with a delicate situation that threatens to undermine all that went before. Some choose to ignore it, knowing that sex and humor are basics of human nature. Others . . . deal with the phenomenon straight on. The double-edged sword of daring to tackle the AIDS crisis in what is essentially a humor and sex medium is that one cannot ignore so pervasive a reality, nor can one easily deal with it without possibly alienating an entire audience. How gay comic artists resolve this promises unique solutions, but whatever the results, we can all be assured of the resiliency of the human spirit."

-- Carl Vaughn Frick

JERRY MILLS
1951-1993

ALISON BECHDEL

Alison Bechdel was born in 1960 to a pair of English teachers in rural Pennsylvania. As soon as possible, she went away to college, came out, and moved to New York City. It was there, in 1982, that she began drawing a series of deranged "dykes to watch out for," chiefly for her own amusement. Her first published cartoon appeared in 1983, in the New York City newspaper, *WomaNews*.

After contributing to *WomaNews* for two years, Bechdel began to self-syndicate her comic strip. ***Dykes To Watch Out For*** runs in over 40 gay/lesbian, feminist, and progressive papers in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K.

In 1988, Bechdel created another strip called "Servants to the Cause," about the staff of a queer newspaper. This strip ran in *The Advocate*, along with **Tim Barela**'s strip, "Leonard & Larry," and **Gerard Donelan**'s "It's A Gay Life," until 1990, when the magazine decided to stop running serial cartoons. That was the end of "Servants to the Cause," but all nineteen episodes are collected in this issue of ***Gay Comics***.

In 1986, Firebrand Books published the first collection of Bechdel's cartoons. Four books have been published to date, along with an annual calendar featuring new work. The fifth book, *Spawn of Dykes to Watch Out For*, is due out in the fall of 1993. Bechdel's third collection, *New, Improved! Dykes to Watch Out For*, won a 1990 Lambda Literary Award, and, as this issue was being typeset, her *Dykes to Watch Out For: The Sequel*, won a 1992 Lambda Literary Award!

Bechdel's cartoons have also appeared in *Real Girl*, *American Splendor*, *Wimmen's Comix*, *Ms.*, *The Village Voice*, and the still-available *Gay Comix* #10.

Don't Miss Alison Bechdel's 4 Cartoon Collections

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More Dykes To Watch Out For/$8.95
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and now for a few words about
ALISON BECHDEL. . .

"The first time an Alison Bechdel comic strip crossed my path I thought, 'Wow! That woman's gonna be a star!' Then I found out that among lesbians she already was one."

-- Howard Cruse, *Barefootz, Wendel*

"I can't imagine why any dyke wouldn't want to own everything that Alison Bechdel has ever done. I myself possess several priceless tape recordings of things she has said in her sleep (just kidding, Alison). Even if you're not a dyke, get this comic. It'll make *you* a servant to the cause!"

-- Pat Califia, *The Advocate Adviser, Macho Sluts*

Alison Bechdel
creator of four best-selling
Dykes To Watch Out For books
presents 40 stunning pages!

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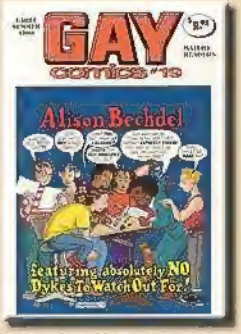

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Stories:

2 - From The Editor
3 - Coming Out Story
15 - The Power Of Prayer
19 - True Confession
23 - Servants to the Cause
42 - In Memorium for Jerry Mills
43 - Alison Bechdel (bio)

Artists:

Alison Bechdel - 1, 3-41, 44
Andy Mangels - 2(t)
Carl Vaughn Frick - 42(t)

Comments:

An all Alison Bechdel issue.